

# Absolute ADVANTAGE

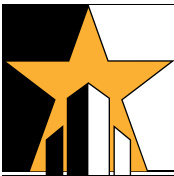
VOLUME 6, NUMBER 9

THE WORKPLACE WELLNESS MAGAZINE

## Creating A Supportive Environment



Developing Results-Oriented Wellness Programs  
One Company At A Time



### IN THIS ISSUE:

In this issue of *Absolute Advantage*, we present information related to the sixth benchmark of results oriented wellness programs—creating supportive environments. Specifically, we'll highlight the policies, practices, and promotions that will help you integrate wellness into your company's working environment. In addition, we'll present a case study of how the CDC rejuvenated stairwells to increase physical activity. To round out this issue, we'll offer up an interview with culture change expert, Dr. Rick Bellingham.



Each month you can learn more about the articles in *Absolute Advantage*. Simply log on to WELCOA's members only website to get more in-depth coverage of the topics that matter most to you. Find full-length interviews, expert insight, and links to additional information that will help you do your job better!

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LETTER FROM THE **EXECUTIVE EDITOR** | DAVID HUNNICUTT, PhD

# Creating A Supportive Environment

## Developing Results-Oriented Wellness Programs One Company At A Time

This issue of *Absolute Advantage* is dedicated to the notion of creating more supportive, health-promoting environments.

The sixth of the seven critical benchmarks of success, Creating a Supportive Environment, is an essential step in developing and delivering a results-oriented worksite wellness program. With this in mind, we've devoted the entire issue to this benchmark.

Specifically in this issue, we'll:

- Provide a rationale as to why supportive environments are an essential ingredient in results-oriented worksite wellness programs;
- Highlight nine policies, practices, and promotions that will help you better integrate wellness into your company's working environment;
- Offer up a case study as to how the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention rejuvenated stairwells to increase physical activity;
- Present an expert interview with culture change expert, Dr. Rick Bellingham; and
- Examine a new tool that can help your employees to eat healthy in a fast food world—The Stop & Go Fast Food Nutrition Guide.

To date, we have addressed six of the seven benchmarks of results-oriented wellness programs. We hope you enjoy this issue of *Absolute Advantage* and find it useful in your quest to fully implement each of the seven benchmarks within your organization.

Yours in good health,

Dr. David Hunnicutt  
President

**The sixth of the seven critical benchmarks of success, *Creating a Supportive Environment*, is an essential step in developing and delivering a results-oriented worksite wellness program.**



# Absolute ADVANTAGE

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 9

THE WORKPLACE WELLNESS MAGAZINE

Organizational Founder, William Kizer, Sr.

## WELCOME

*Absolute Advantage* is the interactive workplace wellness magazine that helps large and small employers link health and well-being to business outcomes. *Absolute Advantage* arms business leaders and wellness practitioners with leading-edge workplace wellness information straight from the field's most respected business and health experts.

With its online component, *Absolute Advantage* provides the industry's most current and accurate information. By logging on to the magazine's interactive website, you can access a whole new world of health promotion—including in-depth interviews with national health promotion experts and insider's information about industry products.

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### Ab-sol-ute Ad-van-tage:

When a company can produce more than its competitors—even though they have the same amount of resources—it has an absolute advantage.

**We believe wellness is that advantage.**

## EXECUTIVE EDITOR | David Hunnicutt, PhD

Dr. Hunnicutt is President of the Wellness Council of America. As a leader in the field of health promotion, his vision has led to the creation of numerous publications designed to link health promotion objectives to business outcomes.

## MANAGING EDITOR | Brittanie Leffelman, MS

Brittanie is the Director of Operations and manages major writing projects at WELCOA. With a Master's Degree in Health Promotion, she regularly coordinates national health forums, major grants, and state and local wellness initiatives.

## DIRECTOR OF MARKETING | William Kizer, Jr., MBA

As Director of Marketing, Bill is responsible for the design and oversight of WELCOA's marketing programs. With a Master's Degree in Business Administration, he communicates the value and benefits of WELCOA and its many products to organizations around the country.

## DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP | David Steurer, MEd

As WELCOA's Director of Membership, David is responsible for recruiting and servicing member organizations throughout the United States. David's background has been grounded in worksite wellness for the past 25 years.

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As the Director of Community Affairs, Kelly is responsible for leading WELCOA's cadre of locally-affiliated wellness Council. In this capacity, Kelly coordinates the *Well Workplace* awards initiative as well as the *Well City USA* community health project.

## DIRECTOR OF DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY | Justin Eggspuehler

A 2001 graphic design graduate from Iowa State University, Justin studied design in Rome, Italy before joining the WELCOA design staff. He is responsible for the layout and design of many publications including *The Well Workplace* newsletter and *Absolute Advantage* magazine.

## MULTIMEDIA DESIGNER | Adam Paige

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Information in this publication is carefully reviewed for accuracy. Questions, comments, or ideas are welcome. Please direct to Dr. David Hunnicutt, Executive Editor, at the address below.

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## Creating A Supportive Health-Promoting Environment

In order to assist your employees in leading healthier lifestyles, it's crucial to provide a supportive environment. In this article, we'll examine how other industries such as casinos and fast food restaurants engineer environments to engage customers—and what can be gleaned to enhance your programs.

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## 8 Policies, Practices, & Promotions

In order to effectively integrate wellness into your company's working environment, you'll need to address nine specific policies, practices, and promotions. In this article we'll present key insights on how you can do this.



## 16 StairWELL To Health

One of the reasons employees may not use the stairs at work is because they perceive them as unattractive and/or unsafe. In this article, we'll show you what the CDC did to overcome this barrier and how it paid big dividends.



## 28 Around Here

Culture change expert, Dr. Rick Bellingham, weighs in on the importance of creating a healthy corporate culture and delivers insight from over two decades of experience in how things can and should get done.



## 36 Stop & Go

Developed by nationally recognized expert, Dr. Steve Aldana, *The Stop & Go Fast Food Nutrition Guide* is an important resource in the fight against obesity. And by utilizing this guide, your organization can help to arm your employees in the battle against the environment of consumption created by the fast food industry.



# WELCOA's Well Workplace Initiative

## The Seven Benchmarks of Success

IN THIS ISSUE:  
**SUPPORTIVE  
ENVIRONMENT**





For the past 20 years, the Wellness Council of America has dedicated its efforts to studying and promoting the efforts of America's Healthiest Companies. During that period, WELCOA developed its patented Well Workplace process. At the core of the Well Workplace model, we have identified seven key benchmarks of success. Specifically, these seven benchmarks are inherent in companies that have built results-oriented workplace wellness programs.

## Benchmark #1

### Capturing CEO Support

From our experience, CEO support is essential to the process of developing best-in-class programs. Indeed, we know of very few programs that have contained costs and improved employee health that don't have strong senior level support.

## Benchmark #2

### Creating Cohesive Wellness Teams

Once CEO support has been captured, the next task is to create a cohesive wellness team. Teams are essential to building great wellness programs because they help to distribute the responsibility for wellness throughout the organization.

## Benchmark #3

### Collecting Data To Drive Health Efforts

The team's first and primary responsibility is not to start offering programs, but rather to step back and gather important data. The data will be collected using corporate culture audits, health risk appraisals, and knowledge and interest surveys. This data is extremely important because it will reveal the specific areas of health needs and interests within the organization.

## Benchmark #4

### Carefully Crafting An Operating Plan

With essential forms of data having been collected, the task is now to develop an operating plan for health and wellness within the organization. This operating plan will serve as the roadmap and will guide the company's efforts and investments in workplace wellness.

## Benchmark #5

### Choosing Appropriate Interventions

With the first four benchmarks completed, it is now appropriate to begin choosing and implementing the appropriate health and productivity interventions. These interventions will most likely include tobacco cessation, physical activity, weight management, self-care, and stress management. But, they also may include things like fatigue management and ergonomics—depending on what the company's data reveals.

## Benchmark #6

THIS ISSUE

### Creating A Supportive Environment

Once the appropriate health promoting interventions are up and running, it's time to create a supportive environment. Indeed, by having a supportive environment, organizations can be confident that employees will be supported in their efforts to lead healthier lives. Environmental interventions may take the form of policies, physical modifications, and rewards and incentives.

## Benchmark #7

### Carefully Evaluating Outcomes

The seventh and final benchmark in the Well Workplace model is carefully evaluating outcomes. It is within this benchmark that companies will religiously keep score when it comes to their wellness program. Evaluation targets include things like participation, participant satisfaction, behavior modification, and cost containment.

WELCOA's Well Workplace model has been adopted by more than 1,000 companies across the U.S.



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# Creating Health- Environ

The background of the page is a photograph of a bright, modern gym. Several treadmills are visible, arranged in rows. Large windows in the background let in natural light, creating a clean and airy atmosphere. The text 'Creating Health-Environ' is superimposed over the image in large, bold, red 3D letters. The letters have a slight shadow and a metallic sheen, giving them a three-dimensional appearance. The word 'Environ' is partially cut off at the right edge of the page.



# A Supportive, Promoting Environment

Helping Employees Adopt  
Healthier Lifestyles By Utilizing  
Environmental Engineering

► By David Hunnicutt, PhD



**“From the minute you walk into a typical g  
everything has been designed and engi**

**F**or years, it was believed that if you simply provided employees with the proper educational opportunities to improve their health, positive changes would transpire. Over time, we have learned that it takes much more than just educational opportunities to bring about desired and ongoing changes in personal health behaviors. This is where a supportive environment can play a critical role in helping employees to adopt healthier lifestyles.

And, the idea of creating a supportive, health-promoting environment makes a lot of sense when you really think about it. For example, if a company provides weight management classes and coaching opportunities, but only provides high-fat, non-nutritious foods in their vending machines and cafeterias, it is unlikely that people will be able to maintain any long-

term behavior change. Similarly, if a company provides opportunities for smoking-cessation classes, but does not create a supportive environment by banning smoking from the building, it is unreasonable to think that positive, healthier changes will occur. In fact, environmental modifications—like the Clean Indoor Air Act—probably have had a greater impact on reducing smoking rates

in the United States than all of the smoking-cessation classes combined.

While we have been particularly slow to create supportive, health-promoting environments within the field of workplace wellness, there are lots of examples that we can look to for guidance and help in this area. Interestingly, they have been put into use by companies that generally promote less than healthy ideas.



***Casinos have done a masterful job in creating environments that encourage people to act and behave in certain ways.***





# grocery store it is important to realize that needed to encourage certain behaviors...

For example, casinos have done a masterful job in creating environments that encourage people to act and behave in certain ways. Specifically, when you think about the environment of a casino you realize that virtually everything works together to systematically separate people from their money. Not convinced? Just look at the layout of the casino itself—the bright lights, the sounds of the slot machines, the free drinks, the low-priced buffets, the availability of things like affordably priced hotel rooms (not to mention other amenities like oxygen tank refills and childcare)—everything is carefully engineered to attract and keep customers for hours and days at a time.

But casinos aren't the only industry that understands the power of environmental engineering. Let's consider for a moment the environment of the typical grocery store.

From the minute you walk in the door it is important to realize that everything has been designed and engineered to encourage certain behaviors—nothing has been left to chance. Indeed, details like the number of aisles, where certain products are placed within the store itself, the smell of freshly baked bread, the beautiful colors of produce, the free product samples, which items are situated at eye-level, how long you stand in line, and what impulse items have been placed conveniently next to the register are all examples of the techniques used by grocery stores to insure profitability.

In stark contrast to these remarkable examples of environmental engineering are today's workplaces. Although it is still early in the movement, one has to admit that there are very few business environments that have been systematically designed to promote healthier human behaviors. And

that is the emphasis of this issue of *Absolute Advantage*.

In fact, in this edition, you will find important information related to designing and sustaining health-promoting environments at the workplace. Specifically, we will detail a number of things that worksite wellness practitioners can do to create more supportive environments. In addition, we'll provide a remarkable case study of how the CDC utilized stairwells instead of elevators within their workplace. Finally, we'll highlight an expert interview that will shed much light on the art and science of creating more supportive health-promoting environments at the workplace. ★



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# Policies, I and Prom

**Integrating Welln  
Company's Worki**

» By David Hunnicutt, PhD



# Practices, Options



ess Into Your  
ng Environment



**I**n order to build a results-oriented wellness initiative that will last over time, it's essential to develop specific strategies for systematically improving the physical working environment of your employees. In fact, in order to lead healthier lives, employees need to have environmental support in nine key areas. Specifically, these areas include: 1.) physical activity; 2.) tobacco use; 3.) nutrition/weight management; 4.) workstation/ergonomics; 5.) alcohol/drugs; 6.) stress-management; 7.) seatbelt safety; 8.) safety/emergency procedures; and 9.) organizational benefits.

But before we examine each of these areas in detail, it is important to acknowledge that although it has been relatively rare for companies to take aggressive environmental modification approaches to the working environment, more and more companies are adopting these important strategies. For example, Union Pacific Railroad has strengthened its environmental commitment to reducing tobacco-related illnesses by implementing a policy that prohibits hiring smokers or tobacco-users.

Another example of a company that is making remarkable environmental modifications is ConAgra Foods, Inc. Located in Omaha, NE, ConAgra Foods has developed extremely nutritious cafeterias for their employees working at this location. In addition, they have also invested in the development of exemplary workout facilities. With these as their foundation, ConAgra Foods is reinventing itself as one of America's best wellness programs.

And, even small employers like Townsend Engineering are taking aggressive approaches to environmental modifications. This is evident from the 30,000 square foot fitness facility they offer to their 250 employees.

That being said, we must still acknowledge the fact that it is relatively rare for companies to aggressively implement environmental modifications within their working environments. Thus, the information provided in this article will challenge you to expand your thinking when it comes to developing and delivering a results-oriented wellness program—especially as it relates to creating more supportive, health-promoting environments.



## Environmental Issue #1: Physical Activity

As we know from the recent research, physical activity may very well be the magic bullet when it comes to improving employee health. With this in mind, it is recommended that employers move quickly and decisively in creating environments that promote increased physical activity during the working day. There are several ways that this can be done.

Perhaps the most significant commitment an employer can make in increasing physical activity is building an onsite physical fitness facility. Indeed, by having facilities on the premises, employees are much more likely to integrate physical activity into their workday schedules. However, there is much more that can also be done to promote

### NINE POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND PROMOTIONS »



- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Physical Activity           |
| 2 | Tobacco Use                 |
| 3 | Nutrition/Weight Management |
| 4 | Workstation/Ergonomics      |
| 5 | Alcohol/Drugs               |
| 6 | Stress-Management           |
| 7 | Seatbelt Safety             |
| 8 | Safety/Emergency Procedures |
| 9 | Organizational Benefits     |



physical activity among the employee population. For example, if your organization doesn't have an onsite fitness facility, you may want to consider offering reimbursement for offsite usage. Just as an aside, if you do this, you may want to consider reimbursing per visit rather than buying yearly memberships—this way you don't have to pay for something that employees aren't using.

In addition, you can further promote physical activity by developing and placing signs and posters strategically throughout your building that encourage exercise during the workday (be sure to see the case study of the CDC later in this edition).

Last but not least, you can take significant steps toward increasing physical activity among your employees by promoting community resources and walking trails. This can be done via the Internet or by simply developing a list of resources that employees can take advantage of in the community.



## Environmental Issue #2: Tobacco Use

Tobacco use is still the leading cause of death in the United States. Because of this, employers would be wise to take bold steps in creating environments that encourage tobacco-free lifestyles. This can be done in several ways. The first is by simply providing employees with a list of Internet/Intranet sites that include educational information. While this is obvious, its importance should not be underestimated as many employees are still looking for ways to kick the habit.

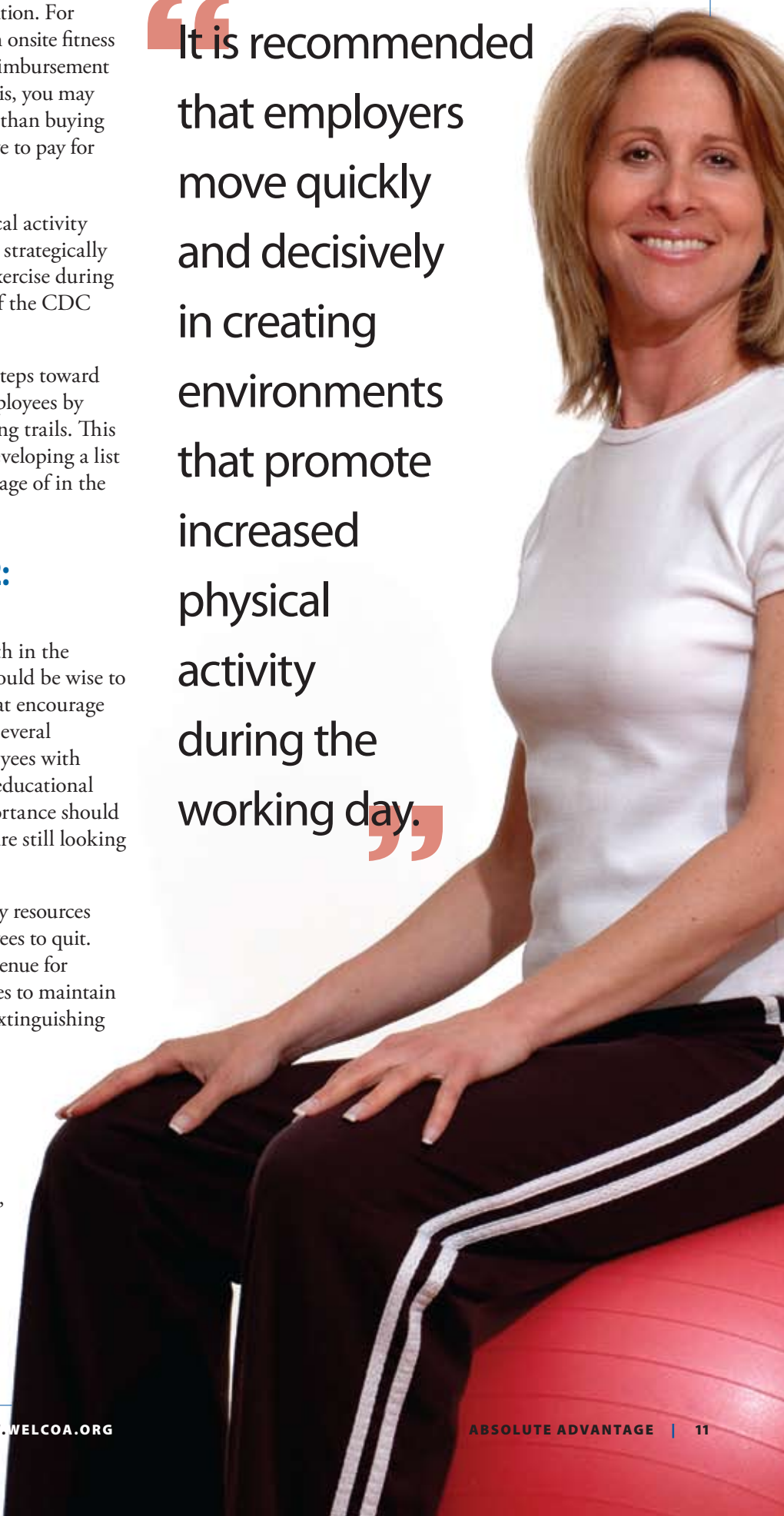
Similarly, employers can promote community resources that will help tobacco-dependent employees to quit.

Not only can this be a cost-effective avenue for employers, it's a great way for employees to maintain their anonymity as they wrestle with extinguishing this difficult behavior.

In addition to the aforementioned strategies, companies can take more aggressive measures by reimbursing employees for tobacco-cessation courses, offering peer-support groups and mentoring/coaching opportunities, and even prohibiting the hiring of tobacco users in the first place.



“It is recommended that employers move quickly and decisively in creating environments that promote increased physical activity during the working day.”





### Environmental Issue #3: Nutrition/Weight Management

The obesity epidemic continues to take its toll on U.S. workplaces. In fact, some 400,000 people will lose their lives to this issue this year alone. In order to create a healthier working environment, employers can implement several significant modifications. Perhaps the most straightforward are offering healthy food options in the vending machines and providing healthier choices in the onsite cafeteria if one is available. Admittedly, these are obvious places to start but may be difficult and time-consuming to implement. Nevertheless, there are companies that have succeeded in making sure that healthier options are available to each and every employee.

Moreover, companies can also write policies that insure that only healthy food options are served at all company meetings and functions. Some have bristled at this idea. However, when you look at the magnitude of the obesity epidemic and how severely employers are impacted by this issue, a healthier food policy is not such a radical idea—especially if the employer is paying for the food that is being served.

One especially effective way to help bring about healthier changes is to provide your employees with

something as basic as a fast food guide. In essence, a fast food guide is a straightforward, pocket-sized manual that provides detail on what are healthy and unhealthy choices at fast food restaurants. By providing your employees with this simple guide, they will more effectively be able to navigate the slippery slope of the fast food eatery.



### Environmental Issue #4: Workstation/Ergonomics

Living in an information age, it comes as no surprise that the vast majority of employees sit in front of workstations each day. While computer technology may be great for increasing productivity, it can also wreak havoc on human health. Because of this fact, it is important to make modifications and upgrades to existing workstations. Moreover, it's essential that you provide your employees with specific instruction on how they can be more ergonomically efficient during the workday.

The entire process can start with a workstation assessment. By conducting workstation assessments, both the employer and the employee will gain a better understanding of the individual's working environment. Specifically, workstation assessments are performed by professionals who have been expertly trained in the field, and they generally begin with a checklist-type of overview examining such things as computer monitor height, keyboard and mouse position, chair mechanics, and lighting. At the completion of the assessment, the employee and employer are given helpful recommendations on how to improve each and every workstation within the organization.

It is also recommended that employers closely monitor the facility's heating, lighting, and ventilation systems as it is not uncommon for employees to experience significant health issues when these systems are not closely monitored.

In addition to conducting workstation assessments and monitoring the physical working environment, it is recommended that employers provide employees with information on ergonomic issues—especially as it relates to identifying musculoskeletal concerns such as back pain and wrist/hand discomfort.





“By conducting workstation assessments, both the employer and the employee will gain a better understanding of the individual’s working environment.”





## Environmental Issue #5: Alcohol/Drugs

Even though significant advancements have been made in the area of reducing alcohol and drug use at the workplace, there are still strong steps that employers can take to insure that they are providing a safe and disciplined environment for all employees.

First and foremost, it is important that employers set clear expectations for employees through the establishment of proactive and aggressive alcohol and other drug policies. By setting forth such documents—and widely disseminating them throughout the organization—the employer is making it known that alcohol and other drug use is not acceptable at the workplace.

But workplace policies are not enough by themselves to effectively eliminate all illicit use at work. That's why it's important that employers utilize random drug testing and perhaps even pre-employment testing for new hires. In addition, because the employer does not want to be branded as “big brother,” you may want to consider developing an in-house Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or contracting with a firm that can provide these services. And, as always, it's important to provide employees with quality health information—especially as it relates to identifying the signs and symptoms of problematic alcohol and other drug use.



## Environmental Issue #6: Stress-Management

In the push and shove world of work, negative stress can take a serious toll on employees. To combat the harmful effects of distress, employers can take strong steps to create an environment that systematically reduces the amount of stress that impacts employees.

Perhaps the most effective way to reduce stress at the workplace is to make sure that clear expectations have been set for each and every employee. By establishing clear expectations, employers will reduce the amount of individual stress as there will be no confusion about who is responsible for what task and how people will be judged and evaluated for their efforts.

Closely linked to setting clear expectations is the notion of providing employees with the right tools and equipment to insure that they can get their job done efficiently and effectively. Indeed, if employers were to address these two issues alone, a significant portion of unhealthy stress in the workplace would be eliminated.

In addition to establishing clear expectations and providing employees with the right tools, employers can offer mentoring and coaching opportunities as well as peer support groups. This is important because of the new research that is emerging which indicates that workplaces that have more friendly relationships are less stressful places to work.

Finally, employers can also take strong steps to reducing the negative effects of stress at the workplace by developing and promoting employee counseling services for both employees and their family members.



## Environmental Issue #7: Seatbelt Safety

Because one of the leading causes of death at the worksite is traffic-related accidents, employers would be wise to implement a clear and concise policy concerning seatbelt use. Specifically, it is recommended that these policies include mandatory seatbelt use verbiage anytime any employee is on company business or operating company equipment. Because many states have now passed mandatory seatbelt laws, some employers mistakenly believe that they don't have to set expectations regarding this issue at work any longer. We believe that this is a big mistake because a workplace seatbelt policy helps to reinforce the notion that the employer is committed to protecting the health and safety of the employee while at work. Moreover, by reiterating state law, the employer provides the employee with one more exposure to an important health message.



## Environmental Issue #8: Safety/Emergency Procedures

Since 9/11, safety and emergency procedures have become major priorities for employers. At a minimum, if an employer desires to create a safe and healthy working environment, safety and emergency procedures should be developed and widely circulated. Included within this policy should be things like emergency medicine protocols, fire evacuation, bomb threats, natural disasters, information system failures, employee/customer violence, communicable disease outbreaks, and reacting to acts of terrorism.

Although this is not particularly new information, recent studies indicate that many employers throughout the United States are ill-prepared and/or unprepared when it comes to addressing these issues. The bottom line is that if an employer wishes to create a supportive, health-promoting environment, these issues must be addressed.



## Environmental Issue #9: Organizational Benefits

Perhaps the holy grail of a supportive, health-promoting environment is the organization's benefit package for employees. Time and time again, research indicates that employers that offer a wide range of benefit options—including things like health insurance, maternal/paternal leave, disability, paid time off, 401-K, etc.—are much healthier places to work.

It's also important to understand that developing an excellent benefits package is not something that applies just to larger corporations. Indeed, small employers can create great places to work and promote health by developing an outstanding organizational benefit package.

When it comes to the organization's benefits, it's important to realize that it will have a profound effect not only on retention but on employee health as well.

## Summary

In this article, we have discussed nine areas that need to be addressed in order to create a more supportive, health-promoting environment. We recognize that this list is not all-inclusive—nor was it intended to be. Rather, our intent was to provide an aerial view of the art and science of creating supportive environments to improve, enhance, and protect employee health. We encourage you to utilize the checklist that has been provided at the end of this issue of *Absolute Advantage*. By completing it, you will have a better understanding of the areas that have been well-addressed within your organization and those which still need attention. ★



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ABSOLUTE ADVANTAGE

# StairWELL

How To  
Rejuvenate

# To Health

## The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Renated Stairwells to Increase Physical Activity

Taking the stairs is one way to be more physically active.

At work, employees are often presented with a choice between taking the stairs and taking an elevator or escalator.

Choosing the stairs instead of the elevator is a quick way for people to add physical activity to their day.

Using the stairs requires little additional time, no wardrobe change, and few additional costs because building code requires stairs. If your building has a staircase, why not start using it now?

## Here's How CDC Initiated A Stairwell Program

One of the reasons employees may not use the stairs at work is because they perceive them as unattractive and/or unsafe. CDC's Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity conducted a study beginning in 1998 to see if making physical changes to a stairwell in the Atlanta-based Koger Center Rhodes Building, combined with music and motivational signs would motivate employees to use the stairs. A four-stage passive intervention was implemented over 3 ½ years that included painting and carpeting, framed artwork, motivational signs, and music. Infrared beams were used to track the number of stair users. "StairWELL to Better Health" was a low-cost intervention (less than \$16,000\*), and the data suggest that physical improvements, motivational signs, and music can increase stairwell use among building occupants.\*\*

From their efforts, the Staff at the CDC have made available the information you need to transform your stairs into StairWELLS for better health.

The following topics are addressed in this article:

- ➔ Improving the Visual Appeal of Your Stairwells
- ➔ Creating and Testing Motivational Signs
- ➔ Installing Music
- ➔ Other Ideas to Consider
- ➔ Tracking Stair Usage
- ➔ Project Checklist
- ➔ Related Resources

## Section 1: Stairwell Appearance

Taking the stairs is a great way to increase your daily physical activity. But let's face it—if you must decide between riding to the 5<sup>th</sup> floor in a carpeted, well-lit elevator (which requires no effort) versus walking up flights of stairs surrounded by stark gray walls and concrete floors, which would you choose? An important motivator in encouraging people to take the stairs is making stairwells a safer, more inviting place to be.

## How The CDC Rejuvenated Stairwells To Increase Physical Activity

Through CDC's "StairWELL to Better Health" project, the Rhodes Building stairwells were rejuvenated. First, carpeting was laid over the concrete stairs and flooring, and rubber treading was added to each of the steps to maximize safety.

Next, the bare walls were transformed by adding brightly colored paint, with each floor a different color. Framed artwork also was added to each floor, which featured people being active, photos of nutritious foods, and picturesque scenery. Royalty-free clip-art was used for many of the pictures, to keep the cost of artwork low.

### What You Can Do

✓	Carpet your stairwell if it isn't already, or if the carpet is in bad repair.
✓	Add rubber treading for safety.
✓	Paint the walls bright colors.
✓	Hang artwork in the stairwell, if permitted. Other ideas for framed art include cartoons and children's art. Pictures should be changed periodically to keep stair users from getting bored.
✓	See Project Check list for materials and budget worksheets
✓	Be sure to leave room for motivational signs. The next page gives you examples of fun and functional motivational signs.

**A Word About Permits:** check with your building manager and safety officer to identify all relevant permits, fire and building codes BEFORE you make your purchases. It would be a shame to spend a lot of money on framed artwork, for example, only to find out that it is against code in your area to hang them!



## References

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Physical activity and health: a report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 1996.

\*This amount included the purchase of paint, carpet, rubber treading, picture frames, artwork, signage and installation of music.

\*\*Kerr, N.A., Yore, M.M., Ham, S.A., & Dietz, W.H. (2004). Increasing Stair Use in a Worksite Through Environmental Changes. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 18 (4): 312–315.







“Through CDC’s “StairWELL to Better Health” project, the stairwell walls were transformed by adding brightly colored paint, with each floor a different color. Framed artwork also was added to each floor, which featured people being active, photos of nutritious foods, and picturesque scenery. Royalty-free clip-art was used for many of the pictures, to keep the cost of artwork low.”

## Section 2: Motivational Signs

The adage is true—old habits ARE hard to break. And for most people, riding the elevator is an old habit. Some people even forget that there are stairs! Posting motivational signs at the places where people have a choice between the stairs and elevator is an important aspect of encouraging people to use the stairs. However, messages and artwork that are motivating to one audience may be a turn-off to another, which is why it is important to test them with your audience first. Find out what motivates your audience and tailor your messages and artwork accordingly. This will help maximize the effectiveness of this intervention.

### What The CDC Did To Create & Test Signs

Below is a brief description of how CDC created and tested messages for its signs:

1. A group of people with combined knowledge about physical activity as well health communication and

social marketing brainstormed different kinds of messages to consider for the signs (inspirational, factual, and congratulatory). They focused on what they thought would be most motivational to employees.

2. Two focus groups were conducted to see how well these messages tested with the audience (employees working in the Rhodes Building). One focus group was done with employees who frequently used the stairs. The other focus group was done with employees who were not frequent stair users.
3. The moderator welcomed participants and refreshments were offered. The moderator reiterated that the purpose of the focus group was to obtain participants’ candid responses regarding the messages that would be placed in various locations throughout the building promoting stairwell use. Participants were asked to speak openly and honestly about the messages.



4. The moderator asked participants to introduce themselves, state on which floor their offices were located, and how their bodies reacted when they walked the stairs. These questions prepared participants for message testing.
5. Next, participants were shown each pre-made sign highlighting a message, and were asked how they felt about the sign.
6. The information gathered from the focus groups was then used to further tailor the messages to meet the needs and perceptions of the audience.
7. After the signs were created, they were placed strategically at “points-of-decision” around the building. (e.g., sign at the elevator saying, “No waiting one door over.”)

### What You Can Do

✓	Develop some signs, or start with the samples provided by CDC.
✓	Hold a focus group with some employees to get feedback about the signs. If possible, include employees who regularly use the stairs, and employees who don't.
✓	At the focus groups, explain the purpose of the project. Tell participants that their honest opinion is needed. Show examples of the signs and ask for their opinions. Do the signs make them feel motivated? Interested? Irritated? Use this feedback to develop signs that work for your employees.
✓	If you don't have the time or money to invest in such thorough research, you can test your signs and artwork more informally. Ask colleagues around the office to tell you what they think of various signs, and artwork. Or send out a survey over email. Any input you get is going to help you make better decisions, increase awareness of the project, and make people feel involved!

### Message Ideas

Research indicates that signs are an effective motivator for behavior change involving point-of-prompt decisions, like choosing between the stairs or the elevator. Whether the messages are inspirational, factual, health-related, or humorous, find out what works best with your audience.

The sidebar on this page contains a list of sample messages. Feel free to use any of these on your signs, or create your own!

- *Do some reps...take the steps.*
- *Do you want to reduce stress and tension?*
- *Don't wait, activate!*
- *For a better today and a healthier tomorrow.*
- *Fight fat...Feel fit...Frequent these flights.*
- *Feeling stressed? Burn some steam.*
- *Free fitness program.*
- *Have you had your exercise today?*
- *Hey, thought about the stairs?*
- *Now that you have refueled...*
- *No waiting one door over.*
- *No time to exercise today? Your opportunity is now!*
- *Physical activity will add years to your life, and life to your years.*
- *Raise your fitness level, one step at a time.*
- *Sneak activity into your daily routine.*
- *Skip the elevator and take a flight for fitness.*
- *Step up to a healthier lifestyle.*
- *Small steps make a big difference.*
- *Step up to a new level of fitness!*
- *The cheapest gym anywhere...the stairs!*
- *The first wealth is health. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)*
- *The victory is not always to the swift, but to those who keep moving.*
- *There are 1440 minutes in every day...schedule 30 of them for physical activity.*
- *Want to help control your weight?*
- *Walk stairs -Burn calories -Feel better -Weigh less -Simple, isn't it?*
- *Your heart needs exercise. Here's your chance.*
- *We are what we repeatedly do. (Aristotle)*
- *You don't wear out...you rust out. Stay active.*



Change  
happens  
one step  
at a time.



I'm walkin'.  
Yes, indeed.

(Fats Domino)



The victory  
is not always  
to the  
swift, but to  
those who  
keep moving.



Physical  
activity will  
add years  
to your life,  
and life to  
your years.



The first  
wealth  
is  
health.

(Ralph Waldo Emerson)



Walking  
up stairs  
burns almost  
5 times more  
calories than  
riding an  
elevator.



*“The adage is true—old habits ARE hard to break. And for most people, riding the elevator is an old habit. Some people even forget that there are stairs! Posting motivational signs at the places where people have a choice between the stairs and elevator is an important aspect of encouraging people to use the stairs.”*





## Section 3: Installing Music

The third stage of the “StairWELL to Better Health” intervention brought music to the stairwells. In the five-story Rhodes Building, a digital satellite receiver was installed which feeds the incoming signal into an integrated amplifier that, in turn, feeds five stairwell speakers (one on each floor). Four of the speakers are circular, ceiling-mounted speakers located on the door landing for each of the first four floors. The fifth speaker is a wall-mount on the fifth floor door landing.

Digital satellite music systems can help you create almost any type of atmosphere through a variety of musical genres (e.g., classical, country, jazz, Latin, oldies, popular contemporary, and urban, among others). Also, you won’t have to decide on just one type of music and stick with it. Most digital satellite systems allow you change the type of music that plays with just a click of a button. Or set it up on a rotating schedule: that way everyone can hear their favorite music from time to time. One note of caution, however: put the controls to the music system in a secure location where only a few people have access to it.

## Section 4: Other Ideas to Consider

Looking for more ways to improve your stairwells? If your budget allows, you may want to work with an interior designer or color consultant to help you create the right “feel” for your stairwells. If not, consider the following ideas.

### Physical Alterations to the Stairwell

- Adding carpet and rubber treading will increase safety and make your stairwell more inviting.
- Use creative lighting (e.g., track lighting, incandescent lighting, or halogen lighting).
- Create theme stairwells (e.g., transport stair users to a Hawaiian beach or tropical rainforest during their trip up or down the stairs, or make your own cartoon and have a frame or two per floor).
- Create a catchy rhyme with several lines. Put the first line of the rhyme on the first floor, the second line on the second floor, etc. One would have to travel all the way to the top to read the entire rhyme!
- Include an electronic message board.

- Add footsteps that lead from the elevators to the stairs and have a message spelled out along the way.
- Post arrows showing the way to the stairs.
- Create a “fitness zone” inside the stairwell: “You are entering the Fitness Zone.”
- Put numbers on the doors to let users know which floor they’re on.
- Start at bottom floor and give each stair a number so that users can easily track their progress.
- Allow users to add their signatures to each floor creating a graffiti wall.

### Incentives

- Incentives can be a great way to encourage people to use the stairs. Use your focus groups, or what ever method you are using to gather information about the signs, colors, and artwork to find out what kinds of incentives, within policy regulations, employees in your office would appreciate.
- Make it seem as if users are climbing some fixed point such as Mount Everest or a local landmark. On each flight, show them a “map” of where they are.
- Hold drawings among stairwell users for prizes, if such incentives are permitted. A kick-off event could be held with a “grand re-opening” of your stairwell. Another idea to consider is holding a contest where employees keep track of the number of flights they walk in a week or a month. Award prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place! If prizes aren’t an option, have a contest where the winner may select the music or art in the stairwells for the next week or month.
- Have a general contest for slogans to increase stair use. These slogans can be incorporated into your artwork and motivational signs. Be sure to note who’s slogan is on which sign!



## What You Can Do

✓	<b>Increase AWARENESS:</b> Make people aware of the stair options. For example, hang signs by the elevators saying, “Have you thought of taking the stairs today?” Remind people of the health benefits associated with physical activity, and appeal to the environmentally conscious by pointing out how much energy is used in running an elevator.
✓	<b>Enhance SKILLS:</b> Build employee self-confidence. Help those who are willing to take the stairs, but who tire easily or have other barriers to overcome to successfully use the stairs on a regular basis. Employees don’t have to be able to do 5 or 10 flights at a time. Provide motivation and support for taking the stairs even once a day, one flight a day, and build from there. This is where counting the stairs, marking how far one has gone on the stairs, and other such skill-building interventions are appropriate.
✓	<b>Provide OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRIAL BEHAVIOR:</b> Offer opportunities for people to try using the stairs without ridicule or experiencing “failure.” Perhaps sponsor a “use the stairs for a day” campaign or make it fun and give people incentives and rewards for using the stairs for one flight, one day, or for one week.
✓	<b>Create a SUPPORTIVE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT:</b> If your stairwells were particularly unpleasant before your renovation, it may take some time to change people’s attitude about the stairwells. Talk about the stairwell in a positive manner, and make it seem like a fun place. Let the stairwell be a happy, fun place to be by providing employees with encouragement, incentives, and messages that support this perception.
✓	<b>Create a SUPPORTIVE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT:</b> Clean, paint, and decorate the stairwell; add music and other physical intervention ideas to make the stairwell a pleasant place to be. Commit to maintaining the stairwell so it always looks its best!

## Section 5: Tracking Stair Usage

If you are thinking about implementing a stairwell intervention in your building, you may want to consider tracking the use of the stairs before, during, and after the renovation phases are complete. Direct observation, video cameras, and infrared sensors have all been used to track stair usage in past interventions and new technologies are being developed. Each method of tracking stair use has its own benefits and limitations. The method you choose may depend on the cost, practicality, and accuracy involved.

### What The CDC Did To Track Usage

**Infrared Sensors.** For the CDC “StairWELL to Better Health” intervention, infrared beam sensors were installed to collect baseline data and conduct ongoing data collection of stair traffic. These proximity sensors were placed at each of the floors’ stairwell entries and recorded one passage when a person moved between a transmitter and receiver. Therefore, each trip in a stairwell involved two passages, one to enter the stairwell and one to exit. Information from the sensor is downloaded onto a computer and reports can be generated. Whereas direct observation may be able to measure whether an individual is going up or coming down a stairwell, infrared sensors



“ Make people aware of the stair options. For example, hang signs by the elevators saying, ‘Have you thought of taking the stairs today?’ ”



only allow you to track passage through an entrance or exit. In addition, infrared beams are not able to recognize and separate individuals from groups of people who may pass through the beam at the same time. Therefore, passage counts could be underestimated in busy stairwells.

## What You Can Do

Not everyone has the budget (or the need) for Infrared Sensors. We chose them because we wanted a clear idea how various phases of the project affected stairwell use. Below are two more possibilities for tracking stairwell use if you are interested in seeing how your improvements change use in your building.

**Direct Observation.** Direct observation is the “low-tech” method to measure stair use. It simply requires one or more people to watch and record entrance and/or exit from the stairs. Typically, observers are discreetly located at a decision point at the foot of the stairs and/or elevators. Observers count the number of people entering and leaving the stairwell or elevator and may record demographic information as well as direction of use (entering or exiting). Direct observation, however, is usually only done over short time periods (one day to one week) and in short time frames (2–5 hours). It is not a method that can get continuous tracking information over a long period of time, however it is a low-cost method that could give you an idea of the stairwell’s use.

**Video Cameras.** Similar to direct observation, video cameras also can be used to watch and count stair traffic. A video camera or multiple cameras are placed at points of decision for stair and/or elevator use. Recorded data can then be reviewed at a later point in time. However, this may be a time-intensive task because it requires watching the hours of recordings in entirety. Privacy concerns are the biggest limitation of using video cameras to track stair usage.

## In the Future: Promising Technologies

CDC researchers are exploring innovative technologies for physical activity assessment in a variety of settings.

**“SmartMat.”** Through a CDC Small Business Innovative Research contract, a technology development company is building and testing the “SmartMat” system for measuring physical activity within controlled areas. Prototypes of the “SmartMat” resemble a plain, industrial carpet that can be placed on the ground in various locations such as a stairwell, an outdoor sidewalk, and an outdoor trail. The mat will accurately count people and other objects (e.g.,

bicycles) crossing the controlled area and will allow for easy data access through direct computer download, Smartcards, or Palm PCs. Testing is currently underway to determine the feasibility of use in everyday situations.

**Automated Image Monitoring System.** Researchers at the University of South Carolina Prevention Research Center have received funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to develop, field test, and refine a new, automated monitoring system that relies on camera images for tracking physical activity in varying locations including indoor stairwells, paved tracks, and natural surface trails. The sensor will include special features that allow counts of multiple modes of transportation (e.g., pedestrians, cyclists, etc.), compensate for changes in environmental conditions, and capture individuals moving in a group. The system is designed to avoid privacy concerns by tracking an individual but does not identify them.

## Section 6: Project Checklist

Not sure what you will need to prepare your stairwells to become StairWELLS? To properly prepare for your stairs to become a safe and inviting and place to be, you’ll need some basic supplies and equipment for renovation.

- ☑ **Paint**—to make your stairwells bright and colorful.
- ☑ **Carpet**—easier on the feet than concrete, and more attractive too!
- ☑ **Rubber Stairtreads**—necessary for extra safety when taking the stairs.
- ☑ **Framed Artwork**—gives people something to look at while they are walking up and down.
- ☑ **Motivational Signs**—both inside and outside the stairwell.
- ☑ **Music**—also helps create interest and increase use.
- ☑ **Stairwell Use Tracking system**—If you are interested in tracking how much more employees are taking the stairs.
- ☑ **Budget Worksheet**—some general guidelines to developing a budget for your project.





## Centers For Disease Control And Prevention (CDC):

The information in this article about the CDC appeared on its website, [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/toolkits/stairwell/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/toolkits/stairwell/index.htm), we encourage you to visit this site and learn more about the resources that the CDC has to offer.



Before



After

**CDC** Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Search:

**Healthier Worksite Initiative: Toolkits: StairWELL to Better Health: Introduction**

**StairWELL**  
Introduction  
StairWELL Navigation  
Motivational Signs  
Installing Music  
Other Ideas to Consider  
Tracking Stair Usage  
Project Checklist  
Related Resources

Taking the stairs is one way to be more physically active. At work, employees are often presented with a choice between taking the stairs and taking an elevator or escalator. Choosing the stairs instead of the elevator is a sure way for people to add physical activity to their day.

Using the stairs requires little addition of time, no wardrobe change, and few additional costs because building codes require stairs. If you're building a new staircase, why not start using it now?

One of the reasons employees may not use the stairs at work is because they perceive them as unattractive and/or unsafe. CDC's Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity conducted a study beginning in 1998 to see if making physical changes to a stairwell in the Atlanta-based Kaiser Center Rhodes Building, combined with music and motivational signs would motivate employees to use the stairs. A four-stage passive intervention was implemented over 3½ years that included painting and carpeting, handrail refresh, motivational signs, and music. Interventions were used to track the number of stair users. "StairWELL to Better Health" was a low-cost intervention (less than \$16,000), and the data suggest that physical improvements, motivational signs, and music can increase stairwell use among building occupants.

This section will provide the information you need to transform your stairwells into StairWELLs for better health. The following topics are addressed in this section:

- Improving the Visual Appeal of Your Stairwells
- Creating and Installing Motivational Signs
- Installing Music
- Other Ideas to Consider
- Tracking Stair Usage
- Project Checklist
- Related Resources

"This amount provided the purchase of paint, carpet, rubber handrail, picture frames, artwork, signage and installation of music."

\*\*\*Karr, M.A., Yano, M.M., Han, S.A., & Ding, W.H. (2004). Increasing Stair Use in a Worksite Through Environmental Changes. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 18 (4): 314-315.

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Photo by Stephen Grubb

**Did you know?**  
Employees gain health benefits by adding moderate physical activity to their day. A **StairWELL to Better Health** is an easy and inexpensive way to encourage employees to be more active.

**Contact Info:**  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Healthier Worksite Initiative  
4770 Buford Hwy, N.E.  
Mailstop K-28  
Atlanta, GA 30341

## Some Basic Supplies and Equipment

The stairwell project at the Rhodes Building cost \$18,200, including the infrared tracking system. It is very difficult to accurately predict what a similar project will cost somewhere else, or even what supplies, materials, equipment, or permits will be necessary. Before starting your stairwell renovation, check with your building manager about the possibilities. Also, don't limit yourself to the changes we made in our StairWELL project — use your needs assessment time to understand what employees would like and use.

People considering replicating this project have asked us about project costs. We have included some of our cost and material information for reference only. The cost of our project was substantially reduced because the building managers were preparing to renovate the stairwell anyway. We only had to make up the difference in materials and labor above what they had already scheduled for renovation. Also, material and labor costs vary considerably across the country. In the Project Checklist, we've provided some information to help you estimate costs for your area.

*A Word About Permits: check with your building manager and safety officer to identify all relevant permits, fire and building codes BEFORE you make your purchases. It would be a shame to spend a lot of money on framed artwork, for example, only to find out that it is against code in your area to hang them!*



**Paint.** Paint is one of the most inexpensive ways to make a large visual impact in your stairwells. We used brightly colored paint to make the stairwell landing walls cheerful and inviting. The wall on each floor's landing was painted a different color. We also painted the stair railings a color that coordinated with the carpet. The floor numbers (1, 2, 3, 4 or 5) were painted (in the corresponding color) on the stairwell door for each floor.

**Carpet.** Installing carpet, if not already present, can make a huge difference in the visual appeal and comfort of your stairwell. You might find it is easier to pick a carpet color first, and then coordinate your paint choices to it.

**Rubber Stairtreads.** If you decide to install carpet in your stairwell, make sure to include rubber safety treading in your budget. It is relatively inexpensive and will help make your stairwell a safer place to walk. Make sure to take your carpet color choice into consideration when picking out your rubber safety tread.

**Framed Artwork.** We chose images for our artwork in the halls that showed people being physically active and focused on healthy eating and other healthy behaviors. The images we used are royalty-free and came from stock image banks such as

**Digital Vision:**

[www.digitalvisiononline.com/homelindex.asp](http://www.digitalvisiononline.com/homelindex.asp)\*

**Getty Images:**

[creative.gettyimages.com/source/home/home.asp](http://creative.gettyimages.com/source/home/home.asp)\*

With these types of stock image banks, you make a one-time purchase of the image, and therefore do not have to pay any type of royalty/usage fee. If your budget is very limited, there are searchable banks for free images on the Internet. If you obtain one of high enough quality (suggested dpi of at least 300) you can have the images enlarged and framed.

We chose to place four pictures on each floor—one large, framed picture (72" × 72") with three smaller, framed pictures (20" × 20") centered under.

**Motivational Signs.** Motivational signs are a great way to encourage people to use your new StairWELL. If you want to create your own signs, testing them with the employees in your building is an important step. To develop our signs, an in-house moderator conducted two focus groups (lasting one hour each) to see how well a variety of messages tested with the audience (employees working in our building.) The first focus group was done with employees who frequently used the stairs. The second focus group was done with employees who were not frequent stair users. Participants in both groups were asked to:

- Which floor their offices were located, and how their bodies reacted when they walked the stairs.
- Share their feelings about 24 mock signs, which highlighted various motivational messages.

The information gathered from the focus groups was then used to further tailor the messages to meet the needs and perceptions of the audience. In-house graphics staff created 14 final motivational signs (13 ¾" × 8 ⅛") that were posted strategically at "points-of-decision" around the building (e.g., sign at the elevator saying, "No waiting one door over.").





The total production cost for the 14 signs was \$700. We used in-house graphic resources for most of this thereby reducing the cost of designing and producing the signs.

**Music.** We installed a digital satellite receiver that feeds the incoming signal into an integrated amplifier that, in turn, feeds five stairwell speakers (one on each floor). Four of the speakers are circular, ceiling-mounted speakers located on the door landing for each of the first four floors. The fifth speaker is a wall-mount on the fifth-floor door landing.

This digital satellite music system can help create almost any type of atmosphere through a variety of musical genres (e.g., classical, country, jazz, Latin, oldies, popular contemporary, and urban, among others). Also, you don't have to decide on just one type of music and stick with it.

Most digital satellite systems allow you change the type of music that plays with just a click of a button.

One person in each building should be designated to make the music selections on a routine basis. In the Rhodes Building, the "controls" are located inside the LAN Administrator's office, thus he decides what music plays and when to change it. He is, however, receptive to employees' requests for a change in music.

We paid approximately \$500 to have the digital satellite equipment installed (allow 10-14 business days to order and install). Each month, we pay \$55 to keep our service active.

## Section 7: Related Resources

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### Budget Worksheet

Use this budget worksheet to help you estimate the cost of renovating your stairwell.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Paint  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Carpet  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Rubber Stairtreads

#### Motivational Signs

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Focus Groups  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Sign Production  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Sign Mountings  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Motivational Signs (Total)

#### Framed Artwork

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Graphic purchase  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Print production  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Mounting/Framing  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Installation  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Framed artwork (Total)  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Purchase/Installation of Digital Satellite Receiver  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Monthly subscription fee (ongoing)  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Tracking system (if applicable)  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Project TOTAL**



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**Suggested Citation:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2007). *StairWELL To Better Health*. WELCOA's *Absolute Advantage* Magazine, 6(9), 16-27.





# AROUND





# HERE

Culture change expert,  
Dr. Rick Bellingham, weighs in  
on the importance of creating  
a healthy corporate culture and  
delivers insight from over two  
decades of experience in how  
things get done...

**Dr. Rick Bellingham, CEO and Founder of iobility, recently discussed with WELCOA President Dr. David Hunnicutt, the importance of creating a healthy corporate culture. His insights bring a new perspective on building a culture that improves health and engages employees.**

## **G Rick, how important is corporate culture to the success of a company and its employees?**

**Bellingham:** It's critical. Think of it this way. An organization can have any business strategy it wants, but if the culture is not aligned with that strategy—or is not supportive of the strategy—the organization will not be successful. It just won't work. It doesn't matter if you have the best goals and strategy ever conceived, if the culture doesn't support them, and in fact resists them, you're already poised for failure. So, from a strictly business point of view, culture is absolutely essential.

From an employee point of view, workplace culture makes the difference in achieving health, productivity, and innovation. It's easy for people to appreciate the fact that a negative, stressful, high-pressure culture can cause illness and distress. But the opposite is also true—a supportive, respectful, and open culture can create healthy people. Knowing this, creating a healthy culture is absolutely essential from both dimensions, both from a business point of view, and from an employee point of view.

**So, we've established that a healthy culture is vital to achieving success on a variety of levels. But culture seems somewhat intangible. From your experience, what exactly is culture?**

**Bellingham:** Culture is the collection of values, norms, legends, and beliefs that differentiates one group from another. And even though we have this notion that culture is amorphous, it really can be made more concrete. Take for example an organization's stated values. Almost every company has a list of words they've chosen to describe how they do business. These lists usually include words like respect, trust, integrity, service, etc. These words help us define culture. If culture is a collection of values, norms, legends, and beliefs that differentiates one group from

another, you can use language to define what those values are, and then examine the norms that support them.

For example, integrity is a value embraced by practically every organization. But what does integrity mean? What types of norms or actions would show that people really have integrity? If people at the organization “do what they say and say what they do,” it's a good start. That's a good indication that integrity is being played out within the norms of the organization. Following through on commitment is a behavior that can be seen. You can actually point at a person or refer to a situation and see that a particular value (in this case integrity) is at work in the culture.





## Years ago I heard you mention that culture is, in its simplest form, “how things get done around here.” Is that a good essence of culture?

**Bellingham:** Absolutely. Culture has to do with norms, and norms are really “how things get done around here.” Bob Allen, a real pioneer in culture change and cultural medicine, was the one who instituted that idea. He made culture easy to understand by boiling it down to the simple notion of “how things get done around here.”

One of the real keys to changing culture is embracing an open dialogue on the difference between stated values and how things really

get done. Lotus Development Corporation is a great example of this. Years ago, before Lotus became IBMized, then-CEO Jim Manzi formed a soul committee to look at the differences between stated values and how things really worked within the organization. The committee reported their findings directly to senior management.

When you think about it, it’s really like inviting a court jester to poke holes and say, “We say this, but this is how things really work around here. Who are we kidding?”

You know, we all have incongruencies. There’s not a person on earth I know that does not have incongruencies between what he or she says is important and how that person really acts. Of course, we’re always striving to narrow that gap and close the incongruencies, but everyone has room to improve.

The same is true for organizations—all organizations have incongruencies. And if this is true, why shy away from the truth? We’d be much better off admitting that what we say is important doesn’t always drive the way we operate



organizationally. Once this reality is out on the table, it's much easier to engage employees in an honest debate about how to close the gaps between stated values and how things really work at the organization.

## **Rick, can workplace culture be a competitive advantage?**

**Bellingham:** Yes. In fact, many companies have realized that culture can be a primary competitive advantage. These days, who you are is sometimes more important than what you offer. That's the difference. That's how culture becomes a competitive differentiator. You compete as much on who you are as what you provide. And in a business environment that's moving more toward partnership-type agreements and relationships, culture becomes even more important. Anybody who wants to partner with you is going to ask, "Who are you?" "What are you about?" Being able to give a solid, truthful answer to that question is a competitive advantage.

## **How can an organization begin to measure and define its culture?**

**Bellingham:** The process revolves around the 5-Ds outlined in detail in this magazine. The 5-Ds are design, diagnosis, development, delivery, and determination.

The design portion means getting together with people in the organization—from the executive level all the way down—to determine what kind of culture is wanted and needed in order to be successful.

Then you diagnose. This step involves doing a survey that asks how important the norms and values are within the organization. How strong are the norms and values right now in the culture? Are they getting better or getting worse? As a result of the diagnosis, you'll be able to validate the importance of the written values we talked about earlier. You can look at the strengths and weaknesses in the culture, and you can see which norms are getting better and which ones are getting worse.

The development phase is all about closing the gap between stated values and how things actually get done at the organization. At this point you involve people, you communicate, and you actually develop and provide skills and

support for people to make necessary changes personally, professionally, and within the organization at large.

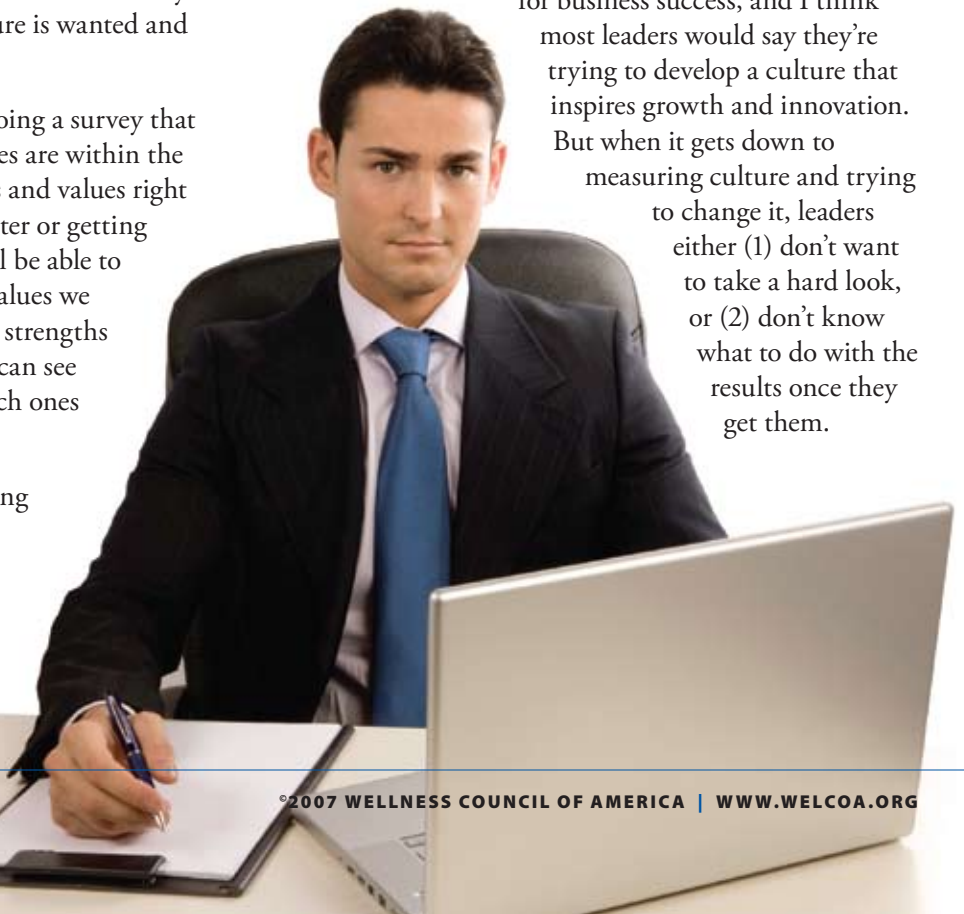
The delivery side is all about implementing programs you've conceptualized and providing people with the skills and support they need to be successful. Determination means constantly maximizing the process. It means evaluating your efforts, identifying areas to improve, and recycling the effort.

Following this 5-D process will allow you to make culture building an ongoing process that actually has visibility in the board room. It's not just an abstract notion that becomes a throw-away item when times get tough.

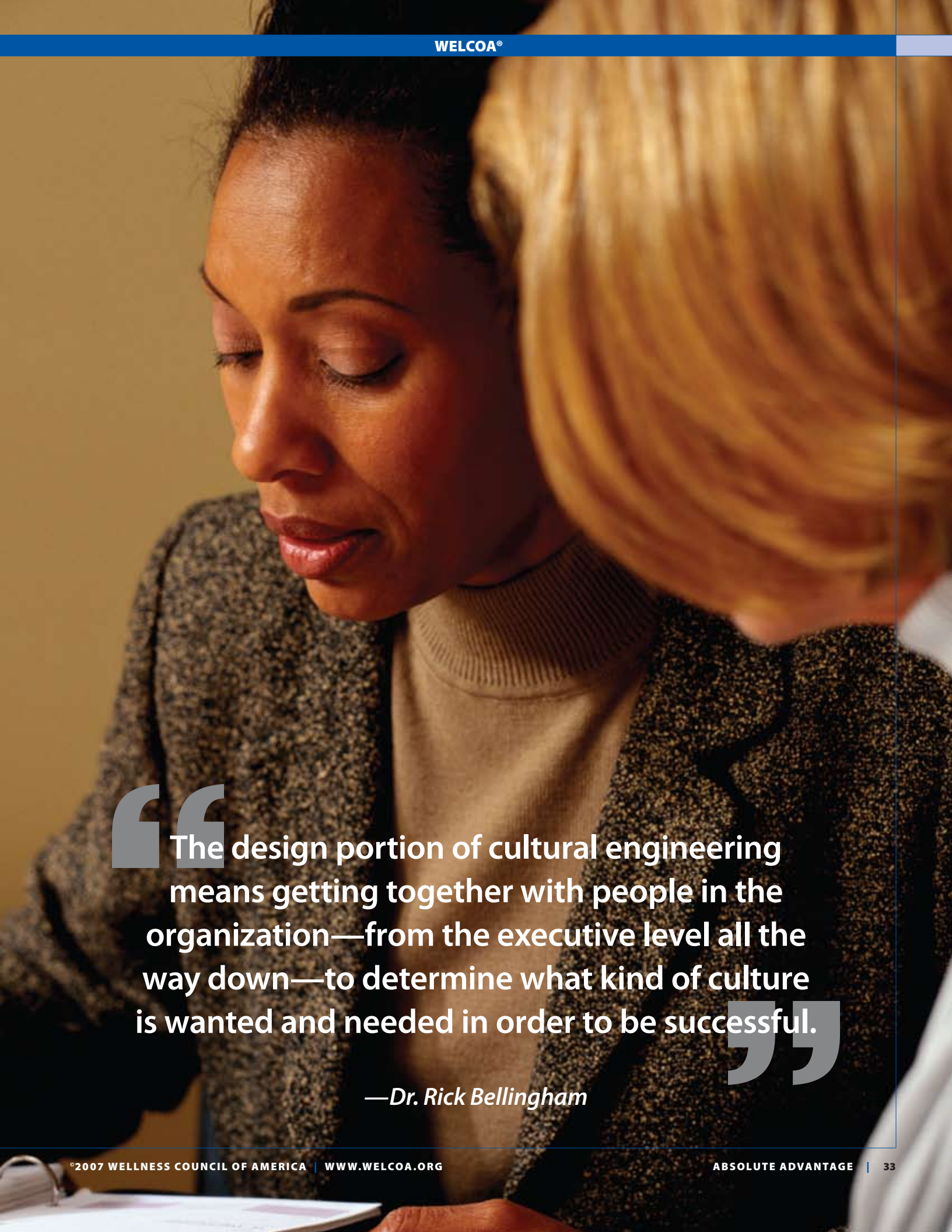
## **So let's recap a bit. Culture can be a competitive advantage; it can be measured; it can be tangibly built. If all these things are true, then how come so few executives pay attention to culture?**

**Bellingham:** That's a great question, and one I've been pondering for a long time. I think leaders shy away from measuring culture because they either don't want to take a hard look at how the company operates, or they don't know what to do with the results once they have them.

Most leaders know culture is essential for business success, and I think most leaders would say they're trying to develop a culture that inspires growth and innovation. But when it gets down to measuring culture and trying to change it, leaders either (1) don't want to take a hard look, or (2) don't know what to do with the results once they get them.







“The design portion of cultural engineering means getting together with people in the organization—from the executive level all the way down—to determine what kind of culture is wanted and needed in order to be successful.”

—Dr. Rick Bellingham



The truth is, the results are nothing to be scared of, and if you communicate them to employees and engage them in a dialogue on how to create a healthier culture, the process can be very encouraging and beneficial. People can create the kind of culture they want if they have a chance to be involved in it.

## How can we help executives overcome this fear and uncertainty about culture change? Is it an educational process? A gut check?

**Bellingham:** Three things come to mind. First, whether they like it or not, executives are going to have to get a lot more comfortable creating healthy cultures because the market is demanding it. As I mentioned before, marketplace relationships are becoming increasingly more like partnerships. That means you've got to focus on culture because who you are is as important as what you produce.

Secondly, leaders need to have a better understanding that culture change is possible and that there's a process in place to get it done. We've done it at iobility; we've made it work. We have all kinds of success stories we can point to that prove culture really can be shaped. It can be aligned with business objectives and human needs.

Finally, from a workforce point of view (and this is where we really get into health promotion and vitality), Americans are working harder and longer than any other workforce in the world right now, and frankly they're getting burned out. Currently, most corporate cultures are crushing the human spirit instead of freeing it. At the same time, the marketplace is imposing demands on people for more innovation, more productivity, more use of technology, and more resiliency and

flexibility. The only way the workforce is going to be able to meet these demands is to have a supportive culture—a culture that promotes health, innovation, and productivity. Cultures like that don't materialize out of nowhere.

## OK, so corporate culture can be a competitive advantage, it can help organizations be successful, and it facilitates employee engagement. But can corporate culture actually promote good health?

**Bellingham:** Without a doubt. Think about what happens in a culture where people are really inspired by the vision and mission of the firm. When people are inspired by the vision and mission, they have a lot of passion and energy. They want to bring as much vitality and passion to that mission as they possibly can. And what is health promotion and wellness really beyond energizing people and promoting vitality and passion?

Energizing the workforce means promoting physical health (engaging in traditional health promotion efforts), encouraging emotional health (helping employees develop effective relationships with people), facilitating intellectual health, (stimulating innovation and creativity), and supporting spiritual health (creating a community with a sense of connectedness that brings people together and energizes the workforce).

When you boil it down, a healthy, innovative, and productive culture is one that energizes the workforce through multiple sources—physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual.

## Rick, let's talk about tangible outcomes from culture change. For example, what role could culture play in helping to stem the tide of the obesity epidemic?

**Bellingham:** There are a number of ways culture can have a positive impact on weight reduction at the workplace. Let's just go through the laundry list.

The first thing that comes to mind is having healthy alternatives available in the cafeteria. Using culture to facilitate responsible weight management is also



about making staircases attractive and safe so that people are willing to use them. It's having "walking meetings" instead of sitting in stuffy conference rooms all day eating cake and drinking coffee. Developing workplace support groups is another way culture can positively influence the obesity epidemic. And it doesn't just have to be with obesity, you can develop support groups focusing on exercise, smoking cessation, diet, you name it. Support groups and healthy competitions serve to get people excited about doing something different with their lives.

## Are you hopeful that cultural engineering will gain more prominence in the future?

**Bellingham:** Yes, I am optimistic, and I'll tell you why. I think very soon business leaders are going to have an epiphany. Not some sort of altruistic epiphany, but a marketplace epiphany. They'll realize that the only way to compete is to have a resilient, energized, creative, productive workforce.

Creating a workforce with these characteristics depends heavily on the overall good health of employees. You've got to give employees a chance to make prudent health-related decisions, and that comes down to changing the organizational current, not pounding them with individual behavior change programs that, in many cases, are hindered by workplace culture to begin with.

If you ask somebody to swim in a pool and you put the current against them—which is the case in most corporate cultures right now—they're just not going to be successful. That's why we've seen some disappointing failure rates from many individual behavior change programs, because we've asked people to swim upstream.

If you change the culture—meaning you provide support mechanisms in an environment that encourages positive health practices and innovation—then you make it easy for people to float downstream. That makes all the difference.

## Rick, after 25 years of work in the field of corporate culture, what advice would you give to people who really want to begin culture change efforts at their organizations?

**Bellingham:** My first piece of advice is simply to change perspectives. Leaders have to approach improved

organizational health from a strategic perspective. Culture change is strategic; individual behavior change efforts are not. What's more, positive culture change is strategic not only from a health perspective, but also from a business point of view. So my first piece of advice is to change to a strategic perspective, and culture change is strategic.

After that, I would encourage organizations to move on to a more tactical level, where they integrate, elevate, and orchestrate. Let me explain.

Organizations must integrate their culture change efforts across all departments in the organization. Initiatives have to be integrated with human resources, benefits, and other core departments within the business so they're seen as a vital component to business operations.

Elevating means that we quit thinking about health in terms of compliance or risk reduction, and start thinking about it in terms of health enhancement. When we enhance health we create energy, not just reduce risk. That's a whole different perspective.

Finally, orchestration means that workplace culture is part of a larger, integrated health and productivity management system. Culture change efforts are not just a one off. If they're not orchestrated with everything else, they'll never stay on the radar screen.

## Rick, any last words?

**Bellingham:** Building and shaping corporate culture is the most important thing organizations can do as they develop their workplace wellness initiatives in the years to come. Culture change addresses health challenges at the core, treating the causes, not the symptoms. If employees feel passionate, connected, and engaged in their work, and they know their employer is actively helping them succeed in physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual health, then success will be much easier to achieve for both individuals and organizations. A healthy corporate culture makes all of this possible. ★



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The image shows a close-up of a desk with a laptop, a pen, a mobile phone, and a 'The Stop & Go' nutrition guide. The guide is the central focus, with a red border and a cartoon character at the bottom. A yellow sticky note with handwritten text is also visible.

# THE STOP & GO

FAST FOOD NUTRITION GUIDE

Lunch with  
Steve @ 12:00

Bring the  
Stop & Go!



# STOP & GO

Helping Your Employees  
to **Eat Healthy**  
in a Fast Food World

⋮ By Steven G. Aldana, PhD

**F**ast food is awesome. You pull up in your car, speak into a microphone and in less than 30 seconds you are eating hot, tasty, inexpensive food. Fast food is any ready-to-eat food purchased and eaten away from home, including food from restaurants and convenience stores. Fast food is an American original; it was invented here. It reflects American attitudes and culture in that it embodies everything we value: it is tasty, convenient, inexpensive, and, most importantly, fast. Other factors in the popularity of fast food are that there is no preparation required before meals and no dishes to clean afterwards. Fast food is so popular, in fact, that today almost half of our food dollars are spent on fast foods.<sup>1</sup>

If you really care about your health, you know that avoiding tobacco, exercising regularly, and eating healthy foods are necessary. But is it possible to eat fast food and still be healthy? It is if you order the right kinds of fast food, and this guide will show you how to do it. By following three easy rules, you can eat out and still eat healthy. Before you turn to see if your favorite fast food items are healthy, however, you should read this introduction. It will explain why you should really care about choosing healthy fast foods, and it will help you understand how the guide was put together.

It is impossible to have a guide that everyone agrees with because people have different perspectives and ideas about what is and is not healthy. However, this guide was developed with the best science available and it was carefully reviewed by a national panel of nutrition experts. This is not the only fast food guide available, but it represents the most comprehensive

collection of nutritional data for fast food restaurants across the United States. It will help you navigate the fast food maze and make food choices that actually contribute to good health, not chronic disease.

### If fast food is so much a part of our American culture, why do we need a fast food guide?

As a population, Americans have more body fat now than any other population at any time in human history. That's right. There has never been a population in world history that has had more body fat than Americans do right now. The most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control shows that 71% of men in the United States are overweight or obese.<sup>2</sup> Just over 62% of women are overweight or obese, and children and adolescents are not immune. These two youngest groups in the American population have experienced the greatest increases in body fat of the past 20 years. Americans also have more type II diabetes than at any

other time in history. Excessive body weight and diabetes cause many chronic diseases and will likely shorten the average lifespan in the United States by two to five years.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, this may be the first time in the past century that children will die at a younger age than their parents. So what does any of this have to do with fast food?

Despite great taste, low cost, and convenience, there is a darker, less desirable side of fast food. Much of the fast food Americans eat does not contribute to a healthy weight, and most of it may actually cause chronic diseases like heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and many others.



**Subway®**

Serving	Calories	Total fat (gm)	Saturated fat (gm)	Trans fats (gm)	Cholesterol (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Dietary fiber (gm)
<b>6" Items with 6 Grams of Fat or Less</b>							
Turkey Meatball Sandwich	1 item	320	5	0	25	1420	4
Green Peppering Chicken Sandwich	1 item	330	5	0	0	1020	4
Roast Beef	1 item	290	5	0	0	920	4
Roast Turkey Breast	1 item	280	5	0	0	920	4
Savory Turkey Breast & Ham	1 item	290	5	0	0	920	4
Subway Club	1 item	320	5	0	0	920	4
Sweet Curry Chicken Sandwich	1 item	370	5	0	0	920	4
Spicy Chicken	1 item	230	5	0	0	920	4
<b>6" Fresh Toasted Items</b>							
Cheese Steak	1 item	360	5	0	0	920	4
Chipotle Southwest Cheese Steak	1 item	450	5	0	0	920	4
Roast Beef	1 item	45	0	0	0	920	4
Roast Turkey Breast	1 item	50	0	0	0	920	4
Roast Turkey Breast & Ham	1 item	50	0	0	0	920	4
<b>6" Cold Items</b>							
Gold Cut Combo	1 item	320	5	0	0	920	4
<b>Deli-Style Items</b>							

**The Stop & Go Fast Food Nutrition Guide was developed with the best science available and it was carefully reviewed by a national panel of nutrition experts.**





## Here's the Proof

When you compare people who eat a lot of fast food with people who don't, there are several differences between the two groups. Fast food eaters consume more dietary fat and saturated fat. They also have more body fat, and they eat fewer fruits and vegetables.<sup>4</sup> Studies have shown this to be true for children, Black and White adolescent girls, college-aged adults, and middle-aged adults.<sup>5-7</sup> One study that took 15 years to complete showed that eating fast food was associated with diabetes and weight gain.<sup>8</sup>

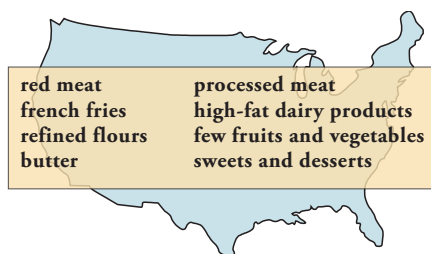
It also seems that if you live near a lot of fast food restaurants, you are likely to eat more fast foods. A study in Ontario, Canada, found that people who lived near a lot of fast food restaurants were more likely to have heart disease and even premature death.<sup>9</sup> Another study revealed a correlation between the number of fast food restaurants per square mile and obesity in the 48 contiguous states: the states with the most fast food restaurants per square mile also had the highest rates of obesity.<sup>10</sup> Researchers in New Zealand gathered information from 1,300 children and found a direct relationship between asthma and the number of hamburgers children ate: those who ate the most hamburgers had the most asthma.<sup>11</sup>

The bad side of fast food is not just a problem for American citizens. Hispanic and Asian-American adolescents who have recently immigrated to the United States quickly assimilate American culture. Within one year after arriving in the United States, many immigrants exercise less and start to eat more fast foods—typical American behaviors that lead to obesity and chronic disease.<sup>12</sup> They learn to live like Americans and they will die like Americans.

## But Wait, It Gets Worse

What the results of this research revealed is bad, but the problems with eating most fast food are much worse. Researchers from around the world have been carefully studying what people eat and what diseases they get later in life. Using very large research studies, they have been able to identify diets that either contribute to good health or are associated with chronic diseases.

There are two diet patterns that appear to either cause or prevent chronic diseases. The diet pattern associated with the best health is called the prudent diet. The diet that is the most unhealthy is called the Western diet. "Western" refers to countries that have become Westernized—basically the industrialized nations of the world that are a lot like America. This Western diet is fairly typical of what many Americans eat, especially those who eat a lot of fast food. Typical foods of the Western diet include the following:



The prudent diet, on the other hand, is quite different. The pyramid below shows what the prudent diet looks like. For many Americans, it may look nothing like what they normally eat.



## The Prudent Diet Pattern

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource> - Used with permission.

The top of the pyramid suggests that foods shown here should be eaten sparingly. Notice that many of the foods listed there are part of the Western diet. The prudent diet is based on healthy plant oils, whole grains, fruits and vegetables, nuts and legumes (beans), fish, poultry, and eggs. Which of these patterns best describes your diet? Do you follow a prudent diet or a Western diet?

Through large studies with hundreds of thousands of participants, researchers determined that if you follow a prudent diet, you lower your risk of developing diabetes by 16%, but if you follow a Western diet, your risk of developing diabetes increases by 59%.<sup>13,14</sup> The prudent diet is associated with a 34% decrease in risk of heart disease, and the Western diet was linked with a 64% increase in heart disease risk.<sup>15-17</sup> These two diet patterns were even associated with other chronic diseases like colon cancer<sup>18</sup> and strokes.<sup>19</sup> Those who eat a prudent diet reduce their risk of chronic disease; those who eat a Western diet significantly increase their risk.

While these two diet patterns were accurate in describing who might and who might not get diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and colon cancer, not all chronic diseases are related to these two diet patterns. When the same patterns were used to determine who might get breast or prostate cancer, there was no difference between the two.<sup>20,21</sup> However, a prudent diet does appear to help breast cancer survivors avoid other causes of death not associated with the cancer.<sup>22</sup>

Individuals who eat typical American fast food are eating a Western diet.





Most fast food contains a lot of red and processed meats, white flour, butter, and other high-fat dairy products. French fries and sweets and desserts are very popular fast foods. In fact, fast food is a Western diet. That means that most fast food is actually causing many of the chronic diseases most Americans suffer from, including obesity.

### There's More . . .

Aaah...the smell of fresh pastries, cookies, and cakes. Who can resist? Almost all foods that are commercially fried are fried in trans fats. We've been hearing a lot about trans fats in the news, and now all packaged foods are required to display information about trans fat content. Trans fats are plant oils that are altered in a process called hydrogenation. In this process, healthy plant oils are heated to about 400 degrees and hydrogen gas and a metal catalyst are added. This makes the vegetable oil accept additional hydrogen atoms and—presto!—what used to be a healthy vegetable oil is now a saturated fat with special properties. It can be used to fry food over and over again without going rancid, and it has a very long shelf life. Almost all fast food restaurants use trans fats for frying because it is relatively inexpensive. Furthermore, trans fats have a texture most people like. For example, margarine, which is made mostly from trans fats, is softer than real butter and easier to work with, and pie crusts, crackers, and croissants are flakier when made with trans fats.

This is where science once again shows us some warning signs. There have been 16 studies that have looked at links between trans fats and chronic disease.<sup>23</sup> All but 2 of the 16 studies showed that consuming trans fats is probably harmful. The

prudent diet pyramid shows that healthy plant oils like olive, peanut, and soybean oil should be part of a healthy diet. These oils are high in poly- and monounsaturated fats. They are actually good for you because they improve your blood cholesterol. Trans fats, on the other hand, dramatically increase your risk of heart disease because they make cholesterol worse. In fact, trans fats are thought to be 10 times worse than saturated fats. If you are going to eat fast foods, you are going to dramatically increase your risk of heart attack and stroke because most fast foods contain a lot of trans fats.

This research is so convincing that the latest U.S. government nutrition

recommendations encourage Americans to keep the intake of trans fats as low as possible. The minimum amount of trans fats a person can consume and not increase risk is zero.

Dr. Walter Willett, chair of the department of nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health, recently stated,

**In Europe [food companies] hired chemists and took trans fats out...**

**In the United States, they hired lawyers and public relations people.**

**No one doubted trans fats have adverse affects on health, and still companies were not taking it out.**



#### The Good Guys

- Au Bon Pain, a 220-location café chain based in Boston, has eliminated trans fat from all of its cookies, bagels, and muffins, and is now using a nonhydrogenated margarine.
- Jason's Deli, a 137-outlet sandwich and salad chain, has stopped using partially hydrogenated oils in all of its products.
- Panera Bread, a 773-outlet café chain that was formerly part of Au Bon Pain, is in the process of replacing all partially hydrogenated oils and plans to be trans fat-free by year's end.
- California Pizza Kitchen has removed trans fat from deep-fried foods and is working on eliminating it from all other foods.
- In 2005 Ruby Tuesday, with some 700 table-service restaurants around the country, began deep-frying in heart-healthy canola oil.
- Chick-Fil-A fries in peanut oil in its outlets.

#### The Bad Guys

- Starbucks, ice-cream chain Friendly, and fried-chicken chain Popeyes indicated they had no plans to remove or reduce trans fat in their foods.
- Meals at other restaurants also are loaded with trans fat. KFC's chicken pot pie contains 14 grams of trans, and Taco Bell's Nachos BellGrande has 7 grams.

From [http://www.cspinet.org/new/pdf/trans\\_report.pdf](http://www.cspinet.org/new/pdf/trans_report.pdf)



“Fast food is a reality for most people. Even the most conscientious eaters have to pass through airports and stop at roadside restaurants where healthy choices are limited. **Stop & Go** offers practical advice to help you navigate the fast food wilderness and make the best possible decisions about what to eat when in it.”

— Dr. Andrew Weil  
Author

*Eating Well For Optimum Health*

Any fast food that is deep fried is likely to be fried in trans fats. As you will see in this guide, some fast food companies no longer use trans fats, but most still do. If the safe recommended amount of trans fats is zero, should you eat a large order of McDonald's french fries if it contains 8 grams of trans fats? What about the yummy doughnuts at Krispy Kreme? They are fried in trans fats, and in this guide they are all coded red to help remind you to avoid eating them.

Since fast food is purchased hot, it is not required to have a nutrition label and you will never really know about the trans fat content. Think of all the fried foods in American fare: french fries, onion rings, corn dogs, popcorn, seafood, chips, and, oooh, those bakery goods. Maple bars, doughnuts, croissants, éclairs—all of them are either made with trans fats or are deep fried in trans fats. The only way you would know would be if you were to see a list of the ingredients or to read the label on the oil being used. You won't see the words “trans fats” in the ingredients. If a food has trans fats it will be listed as partially hydrogenated oil, the technical term for trans fats.

According to a survey conducted by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), the biggest

restaurant chains still fry french fries, chicken nuggets, and other foods in trans fats.<sup>24</sup> The CSPI survey, which included 38 major food manufacturers, 100 restaurant chains, and 25 supermarket chains, revealed many interesting insights into the fast food industry. For example, while several major restaurant chains, including Taco Bell and Pizza Hut, are testing healthier oils, only a few chains have already taken action to actually use healthier oils.

In 2002, McDonald's promised to reduce and ultimately eliminate the trans fat in its cooking oil, but in 2003 it quietly backed away from this effort. McDonald's lost

a lawsuit related to this matter and was ordered to give \$7 million to the American Heart Association to be used to educate the public about the dangers of trans fats. McDonald's has reformulated its Chicken McNuggets and a few other products to have a little less trans fat, but its fried foods are still very high in trans fats. A McDonald's meal that includes a five-piece Chicken Selects Breast Strips order and a medium order of french fries has about 9.5 grams of trans fats. A piece of baked apple pie at McDonald's has 5 grams. Isn't it strange that McDonald's outlets in Australia, Denmark, and Israel all fry in trans fat-free oil but Americans still get the trans fats?

	Calories	Miles you would need to walk to burn off these calories	How long you have to walk
<b>Appetizer/ Starters</b>			
Chili's Awesome Blossom	2,710	27 miles	9 hours
Denny's Mini burgers w/ onion rings	2,044	20 miles	7 hours
<b>Entrées</b>			
McDonald's hamburger	260	3 miles	1 hours
McDonald's Big Mac	560	5 miles	2 hours
Romano's Macaroni Grill Spaghetti & Meatballs dinner	2,270	22 miles	7 hours
Nathan's Famous Seafood Sampler	3,379	33 miles	11 hours
Shoney's Deluxe Pancake Plate	1,609	16 miles	5 hours
Lone Star Steakhouse Lone Star Wings	1,759	17 miles	6 hours
O'Charley's chicken tenders dinner	1,359	13 miles	4 hours
<b>Dessert</b>			
Romano's Macaroni Grill New York cheesecake with caramel fudge sauce	1,760	17 miles	6 hours



## So What's the Big Deal?

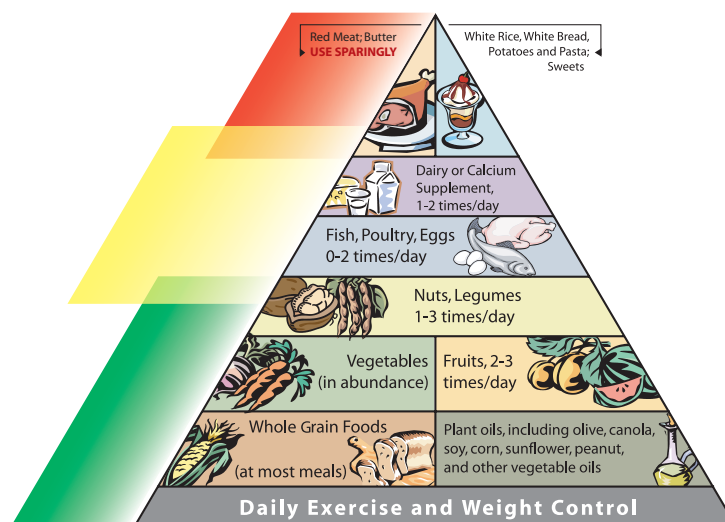
If Americans would reduce the amount of trans fats they are currently eating, it is estimated that 30,000 to 100,000 heart disease deaths would be prevented every year.<sup>25</sup> That would provide a bigger improvement in public health than just about any other medical breakthrough in the past 100 years!

But this guide isn't just about trans fats. Fruits and vegetables and whole grains are also very important. A review of the science reveals that Americans who increase their fruit and vegetable consumption from two servings per day to five or more can cut their risk of many cancers in half.<sup>26</sup>

Obviously, scientists haven't answered all the nutrition questions, but they have discovered enough information to help Americans prevent, arrest, and even reverse most chronic diseases. All it takes is good nutrition, regular physical activity, and avoiding tobacco use.

## Be Careful What You Order

A quick look at many of the foods in the guide reveals a few surprises. First of all, the calorie content of some of America's fast food is shocking. Let's put this into perspective. The average person weighs 156 pounds. When walking at a pace of 3 miles per hour, that person expends about 5.1 calories per minute. Say you decide to have dinner at Chili's, and for a starter you order the Awesome Blossom. This "starter" contains 2,710 calories. If you were the average person, you would have to walk 27 miles to burn off all the calories you just ate and it would take you about 9 hours of walking to do it. The table below shows some other fast food calorie counts that you might find enlightening.



## Healthy Eating Pyramid

Adapted from <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource>

## How This Guide Was Developed

To help you make healthy fast food choices, almost 3,500 different foods have been color coded after an exhaustive process used to determine if a food should be red, yellow, or green. We contacted the 200 largest fast food companies in America and requested nutrition information about each of their menu items. Companies are not required by law to provide the nutrition information for the foods they sell—this is strictly voluntary—and most companies do not have any nutrition information about their foods. Still, we were able to gather nutrition information from 68 restaurants.

The available nutrition information on these fast foods was then entered into a large database and specifically designed computer programs identified foods that had any of the following characteristics:

- ◆ More than 1 gram of trans fat per serving
- ◆ More than 10 grams of saturated fat per serving
- ◆ More than 125 grams of cholesterol per serving
- ◆ More than 1,250 milligrams of sodium per serving
- ◆ Less than 2 grams of fiber per serving

There is nothing magical about these criteria, except that some of them represent half the daily value for an average person. In other words, if a single fast food serving had more than half the amount of saturated fat, cholesterol, or sodium that a person should have in a single day, it was identified. Foods that contained lots of trans fats and little fiber were also identified. Any food that met none or just one of these criteria started off as green. Any food that met two of the criteria was initially coded yellow and any food that met three or more of the criteria was coded red. (Kind of like three strikes and you're out.)

There is an easier way to think about this coding. By using the prudent diet pyramid, a similar type of coding could be done. The pyramid shown here shows how foods could be coded according to where they are located on the pyramid. Healthy green-coded foods would be those at the bottom of the pyramid; yellow toward the middle; and red foods, which should be eaten sparingly, are located at the top.



A further set of rules was also established to help in the coding process:

- ♦ Any food that had more than 1 gram of trans fat was automatically coded red.
- ♦ Foods that contained processed meats (meats like pepperoni, bacon, sausage, bologna, and hot dogs) or more than the recommended serving of red meat were also coded red.
- ♦ Foods that were initially coded as yellow and had amounts of sodium, saturated fat, or cholesterol that were not extremely high but were leaning in that direction, were moved to red.

To ensure consistent coding, the entire fast food dataset was reevaluated and coded three times. To further classify the foods, a distinguished panel of national nutrition and health promotion experts from across the United States was organized. These experts reviewed the entire process and suggested changes in the way the foods were coded. The experts are listed in the acknowledgments section. A final analysis shows that 33% of the foods in this guide are coded green, 20% are coded yellow, and 47% are coded red.

## Fast Food and Good Health with Three Easy Rules

How can you make the best choices when you're eating fast food? This guide codes food as red, yellow, or green, depending on how healthy they are or not. Here are three easy rules to help you use this system to make healthy fast food choices:

**Rule #1:** Avoid the red foods.

**Rule #2:** Go easy on the yellow foods.

**Rule #3:** Eat healthy with the green foods.

**Red Foods** = Hit the brakes!

There are many factors that result in a red code for a food. The number one factor why many foods receive a red code is that they contain more than one gram of trans fat. Lots of

**Pizza Hut®**

**12" Lower Fat Pizza - 1 of 8 Slices**

	Serving	Calories	Total fat (gm)	Saturated fat (gm)	Trans fats (gm)	Cholesterol (mg)	Sodium (mg)
Diced Chicken, Red Onion & Green Pepper	1 slice	170	5	2	0	15	460
Diced Chicken, Mushroom & Jalapeño	1 slice	170	5			15	690
Ham, Red Onion & Mushroom	1 slice	160				15	470
Ham, Pineapple & Diced Tomato	1 slice	160					470
Green Pepper, Red Onion & Diced Tomato	1 slice						360
Tomato, Mushroom & Jalapeño	1 slice						590

**12" Hand-Tossed Pizza (medium) - 1 of 8 Slices**

Cheese	1 slice					25	520
Quartered Ham	1 slice						550
Chili	1 slice						760
Pepperoni	1 slice						710

**If Americans would reduce the amount of trans fats they are currently eating, it is estimated that 30,000 to 100,000 heart disease deaths would be prevented every year.<sup>25</sup>**



**WORST**

Breakfast specialty .....	Denny's, Waffle House
Traditional fast food with trans fats. ....	Burger King, KFC, McDonald's
Mexican .....	Taco Bell, Del Taco, Taco John's
Italian.....	Sbarro
Pizza.....	Pizza Hut
Traditional fast food without trans fats .....	Chick-Fil-A, In-N-Out
Healthy Asian foods.....	Panda Express
Sandwich shops .....	Subway, Blimpies, Boston Market

**BEST**

foods are coded red because they have more than one gram of trans fat content. Almost all of the foods at Taco Bell, for example, are coded red because they contain large amounts of trans fats. Many restaurants do not report the trans fat content of their foods—indicated in the table as not available (NA)—leading us to believe that they are still frying in trans fats (see Popeyes Chicken & Biscuits, for example). Consequently, they are coded red.

French fries are coded red because almost all restaurants fry them in trans fats. Any company that switches to healthier oils could instantly get a change in its food colors. For example, the In-N-Out burger chain located in California, Nevada, and Arizona fries in 100% cottonseed oil that is not hydrogenated. It's trans fat-free and better for you, but french fries should still be a small part of a healthy diet. In-N-Out Burger's french fries get a green code! The only other restaurant

that uses healthy oils for frying is Chick-Fil-A, which has mostly green-coded foods because they fry in peanut oil.

As you will read later, foods fried in healthy oils can actually be good for you. Panda Express does not use trans fats in any of its fried food and is the only restaurant in this entire guide that receives a green code for all of its foods.

On the other hand, doughnut producers Krispy Kreme and Dunkin' Donuts have only red-coded foods because they are all made with trans fats. One doughnut can have as much as 5 grams of trans fats! Doughnuts are a wonderful treat, but they are also a food that should be eaten very sparingly if you care about good health.

Foods made with processed meats or that have a large serving of red meat are also coded red. A McDonald's regular hamburger—the small one that has just a squirt of ketchup,

mustard, and a pickle—is actually coded green. It contains a small serving of red meat and not very many calories. A Big Mac, on the other hand, is a real heavy hitter with half the saturated fat for a whole day and trans fats. How would you color code a Pizza Hut Meat Lover's pizza? Even though it doesn't contain any trans fats, it gets a red in this guide because one slice contains a lot of saturated fat, sodium, and processed meat.

Desserts typically offered at restaurants are coded red because they generally contain a lot of calories, saturated fat, refined flour, and sugars. Therefore, desserts should be an occasional treat, not foods we eat a lot of.

**Yellow Foods = Exercise caution!**

What about a pizza that doesn't contain any processed meat? Your basic cheese pizza gets a yellow code. Although it doesn't contain trans fats or processed meat, it also doesn't contain any vegetables or whole grains.



It's kind of in the middle. That's what yellow foods are like. They aren't good enough to be coded green or bad enough to deserve being branded red. Some yellow foods include:

**Cheese pizza**  
**Sweet and sour chicken**  
**A single taco or burrito**  
**Frozen yogurt**

### **Green Foods** = You're eatin' healthy!

Green foods are the best. To earn the green badge of honor, a food has to have certain qualities that make it part of a healthy daily diet. Obviously foods made with whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and healthy oils will be coded green. Green-coded foods include vegetable pizza, many sandwiches, salads, eggs, and entrées made with vegetables, such as vegetable stir-fry. Green foods are low in saturated and trans fats, they don't contain excessive amounts of sodium or cholesterol, and they are relatively low in calories compared to yellow and red foods. They are actually good for you and could be eaten every day. By choosing green foods you can eat fast food and still eat healthy... the best of both worlds. Another way to identify green foods is to ask the question: Is this food close to its natural/original form? A salad, for example, contains foods close to their natural form. A Hostess Twinkie, on the other hand, leaves us to wonder what its natural form actually was. A baked potato is going to be coded green, but trans fat-fried tater-tots are going to be red. You get the idea.

### **Some Restaurants Are Healthier Than Others**

As you will see in this guide, some fast food restaurants sell a lot of red foods. Others have a lot more healthy choices. Based on the types of foods a restaurant serves, it is possible to produce a short list of

restaurants ranked from best to worst according to the color-coding of the food they sell. Counting up the number of green, yellow, and red foods sold by different restaurants shows that some restaurants offer healthier foods than others.

### **A Few Fast Food Marketing Tricks You Should Know About**

Fast food restaurants are really designed and created to do one thing—sell as much food as possible. It doesn't matter if people eat the food because the main goal is to sell food. To do this, food vendors use time-tested methods to get each customer to buy as much food as possible. No one likes to waste food, so when we do purchase a little extra food, the only responsible thing to do is eat it. Don't fall prey to these tricks and you won't feel obligated to eat all the food you buy.

#### *Up-selling*

Would you like egg rolls with that order? Do you want me to super size your meal? Would you like to make that a combo meal? These are all questions you might be asked next time you order fast food. It's called up-selling. You've already ordered what you want, you're ready to pay, and the person working at the counter asks you an up-sell question. The idea is to get as much money out of you as possible by selling you more food—food that you may or may not want or need. McDonald's Super sizing items and selling foods as part of a combo meal are examples of effective ways fast food restaurants get just a little more out of you each time you visit. Don't fall for it! Decide what you want before you get to the counter (hopefully picking green-coded foods) and don't buy any more food, no matter how hard the employee tries to sell it to you.

#### *What smells so good?*

Have you ever walked past a restaurant and smelled barbeque, fresh bread, or hot pastries? Most food producers don't purposely fill the air with the smells of their foods, but some do. By setting up a barbeque grill outside or venting kitchen grill smoke to the outside, they are advertising their food to the olfactory senses of the masses. If you're hungry and you've got a little extra cash, you may end up as their next customer.

#### *It's all about the playground*

Forget about the food; the kids will want to play at the fast food playground. Slides, treehouses, ball pits, and swings are attractive to small children, and playgrounds and even arcades have become common features in fast food restaurants. Restaurants know parents want to watch their kids play in a relatively confined space while they eat in peace. The combination of food and an attraction for the kids is a powerful marketing play. Unfortunately, the food often doesn't contribute to good health.



*By choosing green foods you can eat fast food and still eat healthy...the best of both worlds.*





### Forget the food, I want the toy!

The fast food industry excels at getting to us through our kids, and the kids' meal is another powerful fast food marketing tactic. Hollywood and the fast food industry have collaborated to create a marriage between fast food and movie marketing that results in children begging for the next plastic action hero that comes with fast food they might or might not eat. After all, what could be better than a sharing a deep-fried meal with Luke Skywalker?

### It's all in a name

Restaurant owners are pros at getting us to buy and eat. If a menu has chocolate cake, it won't sell well. But if the same menu has Black Forest Double-Chocolate Cake, the customer will be much more likely to purchase it and much more likely to approve of the taste. Why would Romano's Macaroni Grill sell cheesecake when it can sell New York cheesecake with caramel fudge sauce? Just the name of the food can impact sales and customer satisfaction.<sup>27</sup> Don't be

swayed too much by the names. Listen to your body and let your stomach tell you when you are full.

## Fast Food Is Only Part of the Problem

It wouldn't be fair to place all of the blame for America's poor health on the fast food industry. There are several reasons why Americans are not as healthy as they should be. Regardless of what we eat, we eat too much. We don't get much exercise, and we have a culture and environment that discourage healthy eating and regular physical activity. This guide is designed to help you still enjoy fast food by selecting fast foods that are actually good for you. When combined with regular exercise, you will be well on your way to good health and a healthy body weight.

When all is said and done, everyone eats fast foods.

**Good health is just a matter of sorting through and eating the right ones. ★**

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## Why not share healthy fast food with all your friends and family?

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**Dr. Steven Aldana** is a former professor of Lifestyle Medicine in the Department of Exercise Sciences at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, and he is an adjunct faculty member of the University of Illinois School of Medicine. Currently, Dr. Aldana is the CEO of WellSteps.com. He has spent his career researching and teaching about the impact of lifestyle on disease and quality of life.

He has published over 60 research articles and has written five books on the connections between healthy living and disease prevention. He is a regular consultant to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, and the California Department of Health Services. In the past few years he has given over 80 invited lectures and keynote speeches around the United States. He has received numerous state, private, and federal grants to research how the adoption of healthy behaviors can prevent, arrest, and even reverse many common chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer.

As one who practices what he preaches, Dr. Aldana is passionate about educating people about the tremendous impact lifestyle has on disease and is devoted to helping individuals adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles. As a nationally recognized expert on healthy living, he is a highly sought after speaker and advisor. He lives in the heart of the Rocky Mountains with his wife and children. When he is not working in his garden he can often be found playing flag football, mountain biking, or running.

# Help Your Employees To Eat Healthier

## Fast Food And Good Health With Three Easy Rules

Rule #1: Avoid the **red** foods.

Rule #2: Go easy on the **yellow** foods.

Rule #3: Eat healthy with the **green** foods.

### Red Foods: Hit The Brakes!

There are many factors that result in a red code for a food. The number one factor why many foods receive a red code is that they contain more than one gram of trans fat. Almost all of the foods at Taco Bell, for example, are coded red because they contain large amounts of trans fats. Many restaurants do not report the trans fat content of their foods—indicated in the table as not available (NA)—leading us to believe that they are still frying in trans fats. Consequently, they are coded red.

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Find out why the **Stop & Go Fast Food Nutrition Guide** will help your employees control their body weight, improve their health, and possibly add ten to twenty years of additional life. And at only **\$2.95**, it makes the perfect gift or incentive.

**Wendy's**

Items	Serving	Calories	Total fat (g)	Saturated fat (g)	Trans fat (g)	Cholesterol (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Dietary fiber (g)
Hot Chicken	1 item	280	9	4	1	30	600	1
Jr. Cheeseburger	1 item	320	13	6	1	40	810	1
Jr. Cheeseburger Deluxe	1 item	360	16	6	1	45	880	2
Jr. Bacon Cheeseburger	1 item	380	18	7	1	55	810	2
Hamburger (Kids' Meal)	1 item	270	9	4	1	30	600	1
Cheeseburger (Kids' Meal)	1 item	320	13	6	1	40	810	1
Classic Single w/ everything	1 item	430	20	7	1	65	890	2
Big Bacon Classic	1 item	580	29	12	2	95	1390	3
Classic Chicken Grill Bowl	1 item	360	7	2	0	75	1090	2
Spicy Chicken Fillet Item	1 item	510	19	4	2	55	1480	2
Homestyle Chicken Fillet	1 item	540	22	4	2	55	1320	2

**Garden Sensations Salads & Fresh Fruit**

Items	Serving	Calories	Total fat (g)	Saturated fat (g)	Trans fat (g)	Cholesterol (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Dietary fiber (g)
Homestyle Chicken Strips w/ salad w/o dressing	1 salad	440	22	8	3	70	1180	5
Creamy Ranch Dressing	2.25 oz.	230	23	4	0	15	580	0
Spring Mix Salad w/ dressing w/ toppings	1 salad	180	11	6	0	30	220	5
Homestyle Ranch	.75 oz.	130	13	2	0	0	65	2
Homestyle Vinaigrette Dressing	2.25 oz.	190	18	3	0	0	750	0
Chicken BLT Salad w/o dressing or toppings	1 salad	330	18	9	0	105	840	4
Homestyle Garlic CROUTONS	5 oz.	70	3	0	0	0	125	0
Homestyle Mustard Dressing	2.25 oz.	280	26	4	0	25	350	0
Mediterranean Chicken Salad w/o dressing w/ toppings	1 salad	170	2	1	0	60	480	4
Onion Rings	5 oz.	60	2	0	1	0	170	0
Homestyle Apples	.75 oz.	130	11	1	0	0	70	2
Homestyle Applesauce	2.25 oz.	190	11	2	0	0	400	0
Taco Supreme Salad w/o salsa/sour cream/chips	1 salad	380	17	9	1	65	1000	9
Bacon	3 oz.	30	0	0	0	0	440	0
Sour Cream	1 oz.	60	5	4	0	20	20	0
Nacho Chips	1.5 oz.	210	9	2	3	0	240	2
French Fries Bowl w/ yogurt	1 bowl	130	1	0	0	0	35	3
Low-Fat Strawberry Flavored Yogurt	3 oz.	90	1	0	0	5	50	0

**Side Salads**

Items	Serving	Calories	Total fat (g)	Saturated fat (g)	Trans fat (g)	Cholesterol (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Dietary fiber (g)
Side Salad	1 salad	35	0	0	0	0	20	3
Caesar Side Salad	1 salad	70	5	2	0	15	150	2
Homestyle Garlic CROUTONS	5 oz.	70	3	0	0	0	125	0
Caesar Dressing	1 oz.	150	16	3	0	20	240	0

**Wendy's Continued**

**Side Salads Continued**

Items	Serving	Calories	Total fat (g)	Saturated fat (g)	Trans fat (g)	Cholesterol (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Dietary fiber (g)
Mediterranean Orange Dressing	5 oz.	80	0	0	0	0	15	1
French Fries Cup	5.5 oz.	60	0	0	0	0	10	1

**Lighter Salad Dressings**

Items	Serving	Calories	Total fat (g)	Saturated fat (g)	Trans fat (g)	Cholesterol (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Dietary fiber (g)
Oil-Free French Dressing	2.25 oz.	80	0	0	0	0	210	0
Low-Fat Honey Mustard Dressing	2.25 oz.	110	3	0	0	0	340	0
Reduced-Fat Creamy Ranch	2.25 oz.	100	8	2	0	15	550	1

**Baked Potatoes**

Items	Serving	Calories	Total fat (g)	Saturated fat (g)	Trans fat (g)	Cholesterol (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Dietary fiber (g)
Bacon	1 item	270	0	0	0	0	25	7
Sour Cream & Chives	1 item	340	6	4	0	10	40	7
Broccoli & Cheese	1 item	440	15	3	0	10	540	9
Bacon & Cheese	1 item	560	25	7	0	40	850	8

**French Fries, Nuggets & Chili**

Items	Serving	Calories	Total fat (g)	Saturated fat (g)	Trans fat (g)	Cholesterol (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Dietary fiber (g)
French Fries (Kids' Meal)	3.25 oz.	280	14	3	4	0	270	3
French Fries (medium)	5 oz.	440	21	4	5	0	430	5
Small (small)	8 oz.	220	6	3	0	35	780	5
Small (large)	12 oz.	330	9	4	1	55	1170	8
Homestyle Chicken Strips	3 item	410	18	4	3	60	1470	0
Low-Fat Honey Mustard Sauce	1.25 oz.	170	16	3	0	15	210	0
Homestyle Southwest Chipotle Sauce	1.25 oz.	140	13	2	0	20	170	0
Homestyle Ranch Sauce	1.25 oz.	200	21	4	0	20	280	0
Chicken Nuggets (Kids' Meal)	4 item	180	11	3	2	25	390	0
Chicken Nuggets	5 item	220	14	3	2	35	490	0
Homestyle Shrimp	1 oz.	40	0	0	0	0	160	0
Homestyle Shrimp	1 oz.	45	0	0	0	0	120	0
Homestyle Mustard Nugget Sauce	1 oz.	130	12	2	0	10	220	0

**Beverages**

Items	Serving	Calories	Total fat (g)	Saturated fat (g)	Trans fat (g)	Cholesterol (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Dietary fiber (g)
Softy (small)	12 fl. oz.	10	0	0	0	0	35	150

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# The Well Workplace Checklist

## Supportive Environment

To assess your organization's supportive environment, we encourage you to answer the following 33 questions. If you're interested in getting a score and a response to these questions, be sure to log on to InfoPoint—WELCOA's members only website—and take the Well Workplace Checklist in its entirety. In so doing, you will receive a set of scores for each of the seven benchmarks as well as a customized, in-depth report on your company's overall wellness efforts.

- 1 **Our organization offers an onsite physical fitness facility.**  
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 2 **Our organization promotes community based fitness centers and walking trails.**  
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 3 **Our organization offers reimbursement for offsite physical fitness facilities.**  
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 4 **Our organization offers peer support groups and mentoring opportunities on physical activity.**  
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 5 **Our organization completely prohibits tobacco use on company property.**  
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 6 **Our organization reimburses for tobacco cessation courses.**  
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 7 **Our organization offers peer support groups and mentoring opportunities on tobacco cessation.**  
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 8 **Our organization has a policy which prohibits hiring tobacco users.**  
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 9 **Our organization has an onsite cafeteria that offers healthy food options.**  
☐ Yes ☐ No





**10** Our organization offers healthy food options in vending machines.

☐ Yes ☐ No

**11** Our organization offers healthy food options at all company meetings/functions.

☐ Yes ☐ No

**12** Our organization offers peer support groups and mentoring opportunities on nutrition and weight management.

☐ Yes ☐ No

**13** Our organization ensures that all workstations are ergonomically sound.

☐ Yes ☐ No

**14** Our organization monitors our facility's heating, lighting, and ventilation.

☐ Yes ☐ No

**15** Our organization incorporates stretch and fitness breaks throughout the day.

☐ Yes ☐ No

**16** Our organization provides our employees with information on ergonomic issues.

☐ Yes ☐ No

**17** Our organization provides incentive opportunities to:

☐ Yes ☐ No

**18** Our organization has a policy prohibiting firearms, knives, and other weapons on company property.

☐ Yes ☐ No

**19** Our organization has emergency/disaster plans in place. (e.g., fire, weather, terrorism)

☐ Yes ☐ No

**20** Our organization practices disability prevention and management. (e.g. early return to work, restricted duty, etc.)

☐ Yes ☐ No

**21** Our organization has policies prohibiting alcohol and other drug use on company time and property.

☐ Yes ☐ No

**22** Our organization offers peer support groups and mentoring opportunities on alcohol/drugs.

☐ Yes ☐ No

**23** Our organization offers employee counseling for alcohol or drug related problems.

☐ Yes ☐ No

**24** Our organization requires a drug test prior to employment.

☐ Yes ☐ No

**25** Our organization offers assistance to help employees address issues of work/life balance.

☐ Yes ☐ No

**26** Our organization offers peer support groups and mentoring opportunities on stress management.

☐ Yes ☐ No

**27** Our organization offers employee counseling for other work/family issues.

☐ Yes ☐ No

**28** Our organization offers "well days" off for our employees.

☐ Yes ☐ No

**29** Our organization provides our employees with release time so that they can participate in our health promotion programs.

☐ Yes ☐ No

**30** Our organization offers health promotion initiatives for shift workers.

☐ Yes ☐ No

*Survey continued on following page ►►*



**31** Our organization offers health promotion initiatives for our multiple or offsite locations.

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

**32** Our organization recognizes and rewards successes with respect to our wellness initiatives.

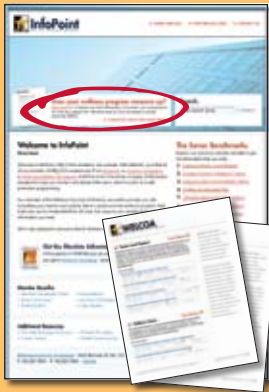
- ☐ Yes ☐ No

**33** Our organization offers how many of the following benefit options:

- |                                                        |                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| ▶ Health Insurance                                     | ▶ Disability       |
| ▶ Life Insurance                                       | ▶ Leave of Absence |
| ▶ Sick Leave/Well Days Off                             | ▶ Vacation         |
| ▶ Compensatory Time Off                                | ▶ Flex Time        |
| ▶ Maternal/Paternal Leave                              | ▶ Job Sharing      |
| ▶ Work at Home/Telecommute                             | ▶ Family Leave     |
| ▶ Retirement/Investment Plan                           | ▶ Child Care       |
| ▶ Tuition Reimbursement                                | ▶ EAP              |
| ▶ Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts            |                    |
| ▶ Health Promotion Program Prepayment or Reimbursement |                    |

- ☐ We offer 1-3 of these benefits.
- ☐ At least 4 of these benefits
- ☐ 5-7 of these benefits
- ☐ 8-10 of these benefits
- ☐ 11 or more of these benefits

**For more information, log on to WELCOA's InfoPoint website:**



**The Well Workplace Checklist**—a copyrighted and trademarked tool of WELCOA—is an interactive assessment that will help you determine how your organization is doing with respect to worksite wellness. To complete the online assessment, you'll need to

log on to *InfoPoint*—WELCOA's members only website. Once there, the Checklist should take you about 20 minutes to finalize. Once you are finished, you will be able to download a short report outlining your overall scores. Shortly thereafter, a full report will be emailed directly to you.



### About The Wellness Council of America [WELCOA]



Based in Omaha, Nebraska, WELCOA was founded in 1987 as a national non-profit membership organization dedicated to promoting healthier life styles for all Americans, especially through health promotion initiatives at the worksite. Organizationally, WELCOA serves as an umbrella, linking communities and coalitions together into a supportive network that includes locally affiliated Wellness Council, Well City initiatives, Well Workplaces, and individual and corporate members throughout the United States.

**Working Well**—Specifically, WELCOA focuses on building Well Workplaces—organizations that are dedicated to the health of their employees. The Well Workplace process provides business leaders and members with a structure or blue print to help their organizations build results-oriented wellness programs. Ultimately these programs help employees make better lifestyle choices, and positively impact the organization's bottom line. To date, over 700 companies have received the prestigious Well Workplace award. In addition, nine cities have been designated as Well Cities—Jacksonville, FL; Omaha, NE; Chattanooga, TN; Hobart, IN; Lincoln, NE; Kearney, NE; Kanawha Valley, WV; and Gainesville, FL and Bangor, ME—while several other cities have made the commitment to join this exclusive group.

**Leading Edge Wellness Information**—In addition to helping organizations build structurally sound wellness programs, WELCOA serves as a national clearinghouse and information center on worksite wellness. WELCOA responds to thousands of requests for information and materials by publishing a number of source books, a monthly health and wellness newsletter, an extensive line of brochures, as well as conducting numerous training seminars.

#### Wellness Council of America [WELCOA]

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# WELCOA's

## Seven Benchmarks of Success

For the past 20 years, the Wellness Council of America has dedicated its efforts to studying and promoting the efforts of America's Healthiest Companies. During that period, WELCOA developed its patented Well Workplace process. At the core of the Well Workplace model, we have identified seven key benchmarks of success.

Specifically, these seven benchmarks are inherent in companies that have built results-oriented workplace wellness programs.

### **Benchmark #1:** **Capturing** **CEO Support**

From our experience, CEO support is essential to the process of developing best-in-class programs. Indeed, we know of very few programs that have contained costs and improved employee health that don't have strong senior level support.

### **Benchmark #2:** **Creating Cohesive** **Wellness Teams**

Once CEO support has been captured, the next task is to create a cohesive wellness team. Teams are essential to building great wellness programs because they help to distribute the responsibility for wellness throughout the organization.

### **Benchmark #3:** **Collecting Data To** **Drive Health Efforts**

The team's first and primary responsibility is not to start offering programs, but rather to step back and gather important data. The data will be collected using corporate culture audits, health risk appraisals, and knowledge and interest surveys. This data is extremely important because it will reveal the specific areas of health needs and interests within the organization.

### **Benchmark #4:** **Carefully Crafting** **An Operating Plan**

With essential forms of data having been collected, the task is now to develop an operating plan for health and wellness within the organization. This operating plan will serve as the roadmap and will guide the company's efforts and investments in workplace wellness.

### **Benchmark #5:** **Choosing Appropriate** **Interventions**

With the first four benchmarks completed, it is now appropriate to begin choosing and implementing the appropriate health and productivity interventions. These interventions will most likely include tobacco cessation, physical activity, weight management, self-care, and stress management. But, they also may include things like fatigue management and ergonomics—depending on what the company's data reveals.

### **Benchmark #6:** **Creating A Supportive** **Environment**

Once the appropriate health promoting interventions are up and running, it's time to create a supportive environment. Indeed, by having a supportive environment, organizations can be confident that employees will be supported in their efforts to lead healthier lives. Environmental interventions may take the form of policies, physical modifications, and rewards and incentives.

### **Benchmark #7:** **Carefully Evaluating Outcomes**

The seventh and final benchmark in the Well Workplace model is carefully evaluating outcomes. It is within this benchmark that companies will religiously keep score when it comes to their wellness program. Evaluation targets include things like participation, participant satisfaction, behavior modification, and cost containment.

# Wellstream

## Health Risk Assessment

### WELCOA's Online Health Risk Assessment

The Wellness Council of America, one of the nation's premier resources for workplace health promotion, is proud to introduce *Wellstream*. *Wellstream* is an innovative, user-friendly health risk assessment. This powerful online tool will help your employees to assess and monitor their personal health status. More importantly, *Wellstream*—through its aggregate reporting function—will allow you as an employer to decipher important organizational health trends and introduce the appropriate health management interventions.

### Wellstream Is More Than Just An HRA

With more than two decades in the business of worksite wellness, WELCOA can help you set up an aggressive and effective communication campaign and incentives to drive up participation. So when you purchase *Wellstream*, you'll get much more than just an online assessment...you'll get a partner who is committed to helping you succeed.

### Wellstream Can Be Customized

If you're looking for a custom tool, we can help you create a look and feel that's uniquely your own. From adding your logo to complete customization, *Wellstream* can fit any desire.

### Wellstream Is Affordable And Cost Effective

When choosing a health risk assessment, cost is always a factor. That's why we've chosen to price *Wellstream* competitively. In fact, you'll find that *Wellstream* is perhaps the most cost effective HRA in the industry. Please contact a *Wellstream* representative at **402.827.3590** or send an email to **[info@wellstreamonline.com](mailto:info@wellstreamonline.com)** to inquire about custom pricing.

### Contact Wellstream Today for Your Price Quote

Phone: 402.827.3590

Email: [info@wellstreamonline.com](mailto:info@wellstreamonline.com)

Web: [www.getwellstream.com](http://www.getwellstream.com)



# Creating A Supportive Environment

## Developing Results-Oriented Wellness Programs One Company At A Time



This issue of *Absolute Advantage* is dedicated to the notion of creating more supportive, health-promoting environments.

The sixth of the seven critical benchmarks of success, Creating a Supportive Environment, is an essential step in developing and delivering a results-oriented worksite wellness program. With this in mind, we've devoted the entire issue to this benchmark.

Specifically in this issue, we'll:

- Provide a rationale as to why supportive environments are an essential ingredient in results-oriented worksite wellness programs;
- Highlight nine policies, practices, and promotions that will help you better integrate wellness into your company's working environment;
- Offer up a case study as to how the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention rejuvenated stairwells to increase physical activity;
- Present an expert interview with culture change expert, Dr. Rick Bellingham; and
- Examine a new tool that can help your employees to eat healthy in a fast food world—The Stop & Go Fast Food Nutrition Guide.

To date, we have addressed six of the seven benchmarks of results-oriented wellness programs. We hope you enjoy this issue of *Absolute Advantage* and find it useful in your quest to fully implement each of the seven benchmarks within your organization.

Yours in good health,

Dr. David Hunnicutt  
President

## Creating A Supportive Health-Promoting Environment

In order to assist your employees in leading healthier lifestyles, it's crucial to provide a supportive environment. In this article, we'll examine how other industries such as casinos and fast food restaurants engineer environments to engage customers—and what can be gleaned to enhance your programs.

**Page 4**



### 8 Policies, Practices, & Promotions

In order to effectively integrate wellness into your company's working environment, you'll need to address nine specific policies, practices, and promotions. In this article we'll present key insights on how you can do this.



### 16 StairWELL To Health

One of the reasons employees may not use the stairs at work is because they perceive them as unattractive and/or unsafe. In this article, we'll show you what the CDC did to overcome this barrier and how it paid big dividends.



### 28 Around Here

Culture change expert, Dr. Rick Bellingham, weighs in on the importance of creating a healthy corporate culture and delivers insight from over two decades of experience in how things can and should get done.



### 36 Stop & Go

Developed by nationally recognized expert, Dr. Steve Aldana, *The Stop & Go Fast Food Nutrition Guide* is an important resource in the fight against obesity. And by utilizing this guide, your organization can help to arm your employees in the battle against the environment of consumption created by the fast food industry.

